Classical Greek Tragedy and the City Culture of Athens

by

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Abstract

As argued, the connection between Athenian BC society and tragedy – an area of research far from exhausted – should be examined on the basis of an anthropological/cultural, and rather comparatively oriented perspective, rather than a purely historical or literary one. A further defence holds that such an approach explores in a fresh way the connection between the two which is based on a model of self, on the one hand, and Sophocles' and Euripides' characters on the other – both proposed to consist of the same culturally framed, yet diversely expressed components which define an individual actor/self as would be portrayed by anthropological studies. Because of the proposed nexus of variously expressed components, the staged character is seen as an agent who exposes the complexity and ambiguity of one's own self of whom the individual agent was unaware of possessing. The above argument, approached mainly through primary sources, will be defended as follows. After defining in the introduction concepts such as 'self' and 'performance', the discussion on the components of self and character begins by exploring their background – the ideology and culture of Athens. As argued, because of particular factors linked to economic and military power, Athens is contrasted with other Greek cities, and at the same time, its performance culture becomes the *topos* of the performing self. The second chapter defends the concepts of self and dramatic character, as well as the elements associating them which are cultural projections of the society, but also are associated with the notion of 'self' as presented in recent anthropological discussions of human agency. Lastly, the third chapter argues on the actualisation of the self's model on stage; after the comparative analysis of the characters' actions in three plays by Sophocles, and three by Euripides, the conclusion reached is that the proposed model of self, cultural, but also self-reliant, is an entity which is utilised as a model agent of staged characters.

Introduction

At the sight of an exhibition of classical Greek sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum of New York some years ago, Robert Hughes was willing to admit to an admiration for 'a number of profound, exquisite and completely irreplaceable works of art' which, at the same time, 'were we to see it [sic] in its original state, we would find it shockingly "vulgar"'[1]. In the same article, he adds: 'the idea that there was some causal connection between the advent of the classical style in sculpture and that of democracy […] should not be taken seriously', which he mentions the writers of the catalogue of the show were eager to endorse. Obviously, although Robert Hughes seems to marvel before individual pieces of art, he does not seem to agree with any possible associations between art and democracy in classical Athens, while he simultaneously excludes certain terms such as 'harmony' or 'purity' related to the art of the classical period by the European neo-classicists. He rather sides himself with the poet of these verses:

> And when I should remember the paragons of Hellas
>
> I think instead
>
> Of the crooks, […]
>
> Of the demagogues and the quacks;
>
> […]
>
> I think of the slaves[2].

Yet, is this not Louis MacNeice the much praised translator of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* two years before his composing of the above lines? He, as others, may

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[1] Robert Hughes, 'The Masterpiece Road Show', *Time*, 11 January, 1993, p. 48-49.
[2] Louis MacNeice, 'Autumn Journal', in *The Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice*, ed. by E. R. Dodds (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 118-119.

value written works of art while they simultaneously wonder: 'how one can imagine oneself among them'(pp.118-119) – the Athenians, he means.

MacNeice may very well express with his verses and dilemmas what other scholars have had to deal with – the seemingly diametrical contradiction between the characters of tragedies, and the individuals of Athenian society: the characters on stage, rising out of Homeric texts and mythological epochs, being kings, warriors or barbarians, seem alienated from their audience of Athenian, democratic citizens, and – yes – the demagogues. But are they so fundamentally detached from the Athenian reality? Are there any possible links between the characters of the theatrical performance and the individuals of the audience?

By no means – to return to the exhibition in New York – can 'the classical style in sculpture' or the creation of tragedy's characters be casually and naively associated with 'that of democracy', but, on the other hand, MacNeice's implied anathema to any relation between the two can also be perceived sceptically since it is true that society and art cannot be disconnected and dissociated: artists/tragedians are members of a particular society, while their creations are not pure pieces of the hour, of a unique and rare moment in the cultural history of the city of Athens. Athenian society is the background of anything created in Athens during the fifth century BC. Terms such as 'vulgar', 'pure', or 'harmonious' do not need to characterize *that* culture, *that* society, *that* democracy more than they characterize any other society. *That* culture and society need to be seen on their own interconnections and complex associations which characterize human societies whether in Athens of classical times or New York of modern times.

The very connection between Athenian society and tragedy is the aim of this inquiry, however, the intention is not to report on authentic court scenes, athletic

games, or voting systems included in tragedies, proving perhaps the indispensable need of the Athenians to see their routine activities on stage: this study, more than pointing to the factual connection between the two – as if tragedy is a mere representation of events happening in society – points to the actualisation of prevailing concepts, relations, and tensions embedded in Athenian society, and the human factor as an interacting agent of that particular culture and society. Consequently, the relation between the two, society and tragedy, tends to endorse primarily the idea of theatrical performance as an actualisation, 'a presentation of what has been mimetically indicated'[3]. In that sense, a link, for example, between society and tragedy could be indicated through the examination of conflict between the idea of ethos and the idea of moral corruption[4] actualised on stage by dramatic characters in certain Restoration tragedies, or through an exploration of the dimensions of political order as perceived in certain epochs, and actualised by characters in a number of Shakespearean plays(Gebauer and Wulf, p.310). Specifically in this research, it is suggested that a possible link between society and tragedy could be examined on the basis of a nexus of culturally founded but variously articulated components which might be able to give shape to a proposed model of an Athenian cultural self actualised in theatrical characters of Athenian tragedy.

Initially, the stimulus for the present argument was a personal interest in theatre expressed at its best by the French actor Fabrice Lachine when illuminating his admiration for the effect of theatre: 'The theatre has the pretension of revealing human beings about their existence. Molière didn't have to wait for Freud to understand the neurosis of avarice [...]. Nor Sophocles need Freud to explain the

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[3] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture – Art – Society*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), p. 5.
[4] J. Douglas Canfield, *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), p. x.

Oedipus complex'[5]. As simple as this statement seems, nevertheless, it encloses notions of creators and audiences beyond their time and culture, and comments indirectly on the dominance of the microcosms of plays, strong enough to establish themselves in the literary milieu of epochs as diversified as the Roman and Shakespearean, with figures such as Antigone taking on chameleon-like qualities: as far forward as the twentieth century, she becomes a heroine in Anouilh's play, while Electra, among others, is mourned by Eugene O'Neill in her New England mansion. Even Jocasta's passion in Eisenberg's poem echoes the fears of a Shakespearean Cleopatra or the despair of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina. Many dramatic characters seem to share archetypes moulded by tragedians of the fifth century BC Athens, such as Sophocles, who in turn, were moulded by the culture of that era which contains the genesis of dramatic characters in a continuing cycle, and life of their own, all part of an eclectic dimension: the textual evidence of their existence and of their relation to a creator, the person of *a* time, *a* place and *a* way of life.

The culture of that age, then, along with a deep interest in tragedy, launched this journey and an impulse Sisyphean enough to become a search in pursuit of the elements/generators of dramatic characters such as Medea or Electra of a theatrical stage of a society which brought about these characters.

However – to clarify again the two types of questions implied here – why does Sophocles write of the Oedipus complex, and not the neurosis of avarice? But, also, why is the Sophoclean text still translated into Japanese, and why do spectators always enjoy watching Molière's comedies? A possible explanation for the first question could have been given after examining religious or sociological concepts in connection to Sophocles' age, the patriarchal values of the society, for example, as

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[5] Thomas Sancton, 'The Play's the Thing', *Time*, 9 April 2001, p.59.

compared with those of other societies. On the other hand, an answer to the second question might have been searched for in the area of political or historical associations, claiming that *Richard III,* for example, is popular at a certain age and country which suffer from a civil war, arguing, therefore, on the level of similarities between the two events taking place in different epochs. Another response to the second question could have been searched for in the area of literature, concentrating on the myth or the language – claiming that the interest is aesthetic, that the spectators of various eras enjoy aesthetically, not only the theatrical spectacle, but the richness of the literary text. Yet, the main point raised here is the possibility of dealing with *both* questions at once, and to decide the following. Which would be the best approach – sociological, historical, literary, or one related to theatrical studies – to frame a connection between a writer's dramatic characters and the audiences of that era, but which might also leave open the possibility of creating a model of dramatic characters beyond their specific era?

The new approach suggested here, without excluding previous ones but enriched by them, is a cultural/anthropological one which aims to cover several themes of research, but primarily, shows concentration on the human parameters involved – makers of plays, audiences, and tragic characters, rather than on eras and dates.

More specifically, it is argued that a connection between Athenian society and tragedy is based on a proposed model of self, on the one hand, and tragic characters of the theatrical stage, on the other; both proposed to consist of the same culturally framed, yet diversely expressed components/elements which define an individual actor/self as would be portrayed by cultural/anthropological studies. Because of the nature of the proposed nexus of variously articulated components, the staged character in turn, might be seen as an agent who, through the characters' communicative

existence, the complexities of their interactions and the multiplicity of the challenges they experience, reveals a complexity and ambiguity of one's own self that the individual was unaware of possessing. After the comparative analysis of the tragic characters' actions which will illuminate the gamut of the characters' interactions in six plays, three by Sophocles and three by Euripides, the conclusion reached is that the proposed model of self, determined yet variable, cultural yet dramatically self-reliant, is an entity which might be utilised as a model agent for staged tragic characters.

The above argument will be defended in three chapters. After briefly defining in the introduction concepts such as 'self', 'performance', and terms such as 'city', in order to emphasise the cultural/anthropological approach of the thesis, the discussion on the links/elements between the self and the theatrical character begins the way any anthropological research might begin – by exploring the 'field' – the initiating cultural background, or the ideology of the city of the self, and of the theatrical stage for the character, to draw the cultural connection between the two. The second chapter defends and analyses the self and the character, as well as the elements/components which associate them, and which are cultural projections/concepts of the society, but also might be associated with the notion of 'self' as outlined and presented in recent anthropological discussions of human agency. Lastly, the final chapter argues on the actualisation of the complete model of the self on stage by analysing the characters' actions and interactions, demonstrating, primarily, the variety of expressions and interpretations their components are open to.

To clarify two main perspectives of the thesis, first, the 'self' is going to be discussed briefly here, showing thus certain anthropological dimensions of the concept, and second, starting with the idea of dramatic character, and the word

'performance', the predominant cultural approach is introduced, all of the above presented as a projection of the thesis itself.

The endorsed term 'self' is associated with the concept of the individual/agent, and therefore, a sense of this term as is perceived here is of the utmost priority, as well as the ways the self is presented and interpreted, and the application of perceptions used by anthropology are explained. An 'agent' is perceived to be every human being who actively participates in a social milieu and 'struggles against great odds, to exercise some control over her/his life'[6]. An agent's awareness of self comes from that self's interactions with others in the sociocultural environment, and it starts from the surrounding world in order to return to the individual agent. In anthropological claims, during the last twenty years, under the influence of feminist studies, and with consideration being given to the including of the agency of women, who were the so-far excluded other voices in the making of culture[7], anthropologists have begun examining concepts of the individual self of various non-Western cultures, and construing a notion quite antithetical to the Western one of the uniqueness of the self defined in relation to the esoteric motivation and will of the individual[8].

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[6] Emily Schultz and Robert Lavenda, *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998), p. 29.

[7] Caroline B. Brettell, 'The Individual/Agent and Culture/Structure in the History of the Social Sciences', *Social Science History* 26:3 (Fall 2002), pp.429-446 (p. 439).

[8] Robin Fox examines the idea of individual and individualism as perceived in the West, and argues that it is possible that it did not originate from Renaissance humanism, as has usually been believed, but, possibly, from the 'Anglo-Saxon tribal custom' of not creating independent, extended families; kingship was not 'unilineal' in those tribes, he writes, and as history shows, ownership of land by individuals existed in England long before it did in the rest of Europe, while English laws of land inheritance did not permit the younger sons to join into creating extended family clans. And, Fox continues, English history and political philosophers, such as Spencer, established further the idea of seeing the world in terms of a struggle between the individual and state when, for the rest of the world 'between the individual and the state there always stands at least the family, and for most of the world, much more'; and he concludes by expressing his scepticism as to whether such an idea is justified, especially when it involves interpretations related not to the Western world but to the rest of it (Robin Fox, 'The Virgin and the Godfather: Kinship versus State in Greek Tragedy and After', in *Anthropology and Literature*, ed. by Paul Benson (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 107-150 (p. 108).

Specifically, the concept of the individual/agent endorsed here is far from the Kantian perception of an autonomous moral agent whose good intentions are more important than one's moral acts[9]; similarly, it is far from perceiving the individual through the consequences of one's actions, and deciding on the rightness of them only in relation to the 'general welfare' as Bentham or John Stuart Mill might have claimed under the assertion that one should 'seek to maximize the pleasure of everyone'[10]. Rather, the individual as defined here is closer to the Aristotelian perception of human agency, according to which, human beings are primarily political and rational beings who achieve individual happiness[11] only within the society, and only by participating actively in every day matters, not because they have moral motives or because they work for the general good. As Lear comments in his introducing the aim of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 'the question of what is good life cannot be answered for an individual in abstraction from the society in which he [sic] lives. Society provides much of the context and opportunity for living a good life' (Lear, p.154); as Aristotle writes, 'one becomes just by doing just acts, brave by doing brave acts, temperate by doing temperate acts' (*Nichomachean Ethics* II.I,1103b1-2), and by being practically active, one achieves self-understanding (Lear, p.154).

The self perceived by anthropology is an agent among other agents, whose personal voices seek to interpret and understand other voices in the same environment; or,

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[9] Jonathon Lear, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; repr. 1999), pp. 152-54).

[10] Don Habibi, 'J. S. Mill's Revisionist Utilitarianism', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy,* 6:1 (March, 1998), pp. 89-114 (p. 90).

[11] 'Happiness' is not 'pleasure' or even 'hedonism'; it may be perceived as 'rational activity' (Jonathan Barnes, 'Introduction', in *The Ethics of Aristotle: the Nicomachean* Ethics, trans. by J. A. K. Thomson, revised by Hugh Tredennick (London: Penguin Books, 1953; revised 1976), p.37), or as 'a matter of exercising one's powers and realizing one's dispositions'(ibid.). It might also be perceived as 'contemplation', an 'activity wherein the human being is most self-sufficient in the sense that we are then most truly the source of our being [...] self-governing' (Walter A. Brogan, 'Gadamer's Praise of Theory: Aristotle's Friendship and the Reciprocity Between Theory and Practice' *Research in Phenomenology* 32 (2002), pp. 142-155 (p. 146). The Aristotelian idea of 'happiness' is open to many speculations, but it is most certainly true that he means activity, *ergon* or *energeia*, practical or theoretical, and not simply sensual pleasure.

actually the agent is perceived as a 'locus of experience, including the experiences of one's 'self', and the ways in which cultures construct and understand this experiencing self'[12]. The entity of the above interacting self, therefore, the same as the one essentially argued for here, might be conceptualised and perceived by analysing certain categories of formative concepts guiding the agent's interactions, and deciding then how an agent perceives the self through his/her interactions.

One such category/concept related to the above model, as suggested, is that of the conflicts people experience when, for example, their sense of personal dignity or meaning comes to contradict their need for survival: the way people react to this conflict, or similar conflicts, reveals not only the way they perceive the society, but the way they perceive themselves in that society. To illustrate, the analysis of exploited industrial workers in nineteenth century Europe revealed the conflict they were experiencing between 'their innermost sense of identity and the labor [sic] they were forced to do in order to earn enough money'[13]. It also revealed their devastating sense of alienation – what Durkheim called *anomie* (ibid.) – which affected not only their relations, but the way they perceived themselves. A more recent study of the concept of conflict, in another society, reveals, however, an entirely different form of reaction: James Scott, after two years of ethnographic research in a Malaysian village, reported that peasant rice workers – poor and dominated by rich farmers – were living under restrictive state rules Scott saw to be completely proscriptive for any meaningful political activity[14]; nevertheless, the reaction of the farmers to this open form of exploitation was not in the form of political activity, nor was it in experiencing any understood form of alienation in a Durkheimian or Marxian sense.

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[12] Donald Pollock, 'Person and Self', in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology (vol. 3)* , ed. by David Levinson and Melvin Ember (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co., 1996), pp. 922-926 (p. 922).
[13] Schultz and Lavenda, p. 192.
[14] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 274.

But it was there, a continuous resistance expressed by 'foot dragging, [...] false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, [...], sabotage, and so forth' (ibid., p. xvi), which, according to Scott, was a 'a kind of social text on the subject of human decency' (Scott, p. 23). The Malaysian villagers, therefore, have found ways to deal with the antithetical roles they were experiencing by reacting and interacting with their oppressors in ways they had control over[15].

Conflict, thus – one of the suggested hermeneutic categories giving form to people's interactions – can be utilised to be indicative of the way people perceive others, their challenges, and eventually themselves: as a result of the conflicts they experience, they can end up feeling alienated, and therefore, be alienated, can end up feeling defeated, and therefore, be defeated, or can be small-scale rebels, therefore holding to their own sense of dignity under oppression. As it stands – the argument holds – the examination of the category of conflict giving form to human interaction becomes an examination of an element of human agency.

Yet, although the hermeneutical approach of constructing categories of aspects to infer about human agency seems to have possibilities of being fruitful, the cases mentioned above demonstrate how the examination of people's conflicts indicate the differences among them in two different environments, not – as this research hopes to demonstrate – how different agents, not groups of agents, react differently when dealing with various conflicts in the same environment. True enough, they do not; or do they?

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[15] Scott's example bares an almost uncanny resemblance to forms of resistance revealed by Lawrence Levine's very extensive research on another group of oppressed peoples in another time and place, the black slaves of the antebellum south: '[...] a significant number of slaves lied, cheated, stole, feigned illness, loafed, pretended to misremember the orders they were given, put rocks in the bottom of their cotton baskets [...] to meet their quota, broke their tools, burned their masters' property, mutilated themselves [...] to escape work, took indifferent care of the crops [...] and mistreated the animals' (Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 122).

Anthropologists have traditionally dealt with delineated groups of people as the above cases show. However, since during the last years, individual stories draw their attention in insightful ways, anthropologists are forced to raise questions such as: 'How does the subjective shed light on the objective?'(Brettell p. 431). To illustrate again the possibilities the above notion opens, the examination of a Nicaraguan woman's story dealing with the problem of immigration shows in turn an anthropologist dealing with the problem of agency: Caroline Brettell closely followed the story of Yamileth Lopez in the late eighties, her immigration from Nicaragua to Los Angeles, and afterwards, she stated:

> Yamileth's story, […], suggests how all these theories come together to explain why one individual left her country to go to the United States. But it equally points to factors that have not, so far, been well encompassed by theory (Brettell, p. 441).

An agent's story, therefore, as suggested currently, may enrich theories, and may leave the door open to a variety of methods to approach the complex subject of human agency, or of adopting anthropological methods to infer conclusions about agents, a projection of which is the model of self proposed here. Life histories – not only observing or interviewing people, but following a long, detailed life narrative – one major perspective goes, in other words, 'qualitative data', should be 'integrated with quantitative data derived from sampling, measuring, and counting' (Brettell, p. 432). Conclusions can be drawn variously, and what could be drawn from studying groups of agents in the first two examples of human exploitation, can be concluded about individual agency in a field of work, as long as they are based on both, subjective data and objective components.

Conclusions which will lead to a possible model of self/agent in the Athenian society may seem hard to draw for two main reasons; first, texts are written by men, and therefore, women's voices – or of others' voices living in the city – are excluded, but can they be excluded from an argument on self/agent? Second, the texts written by Thucydides[16], Lysias, Demosthenes – to mention some of the writers – present either the men's views about women, or the official ideology since the texts are written as court speeches, epitaphs, or historical reports. However, in complete divergence from the above reality, texts written for stage performance are laden with female characters the tragedians seem fascinated with[17]. In that sense, the poets not only contradict the official ideology according to which – as ancient writers report – woman's virtue is to be silent, but they also present an inclusive perception of society since both sexes are on stage. Furthermore, the women's voices allow them to interpret society and state with artistic freedom, awareness of people's problems, and human intensity – all these because women's voices do not have a legal status, second, because since Homer's times, women could challenge freely the official ideology, such as the one related to glorious deaths/sacrifices[18]; and third, because women express themselves quite intensely, with screams and laments, but mostly with two 'typically female acts: suicide and curses'[19] and therefore, their performance expresses the intensity, awareness, and freedom of the artists/tragedians who write plays and deal with human characters – not with state ideologies.

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[16] Simon Hornblower remarks that one of the differences between Thucydides and Herodotus is the fact that the second includes stories and remarks about women, unlike Thucydides whose world is 'single-sex' (in Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides*, 2nd edn. (London: Duckworth, 1987), p.14).

[17] Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is the only play without female characters.

[18] Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p.14.

[19] Mark Griffith, 'Antigone and Her Sister(s): Embodying Women in Greek Tragedy', in *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, ed. by André Lardinois and Laura McClure(Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.117-137(p.134).

At the same time, the simultaneous existence on stage of men and women, and therefore of official and unofficial presence, of public and private concepts, of city and *oikos,* make the Athenian stage an arena of conflicting forces, but also an ultimate stage/*topos* for a model agent who can be created out of various, even ambiguous factors and roles coming out of the Athenian culture *and* private – read as individual – interpretations of this culture. The tragic characters, consequently, are not the 'official' characters of the Athenian ideology – of the court speeches, the epitaphs, and the glorious deaths – but of the ideology of the tragedians, of Sophocles who fights in a war for his city and is a friend of Pericles, or of Euripides who is ridiculed by Aristophanes in his *Frogs*, and finally decides to leave his city and die in another city. They do not express a collective ideology, but a private agency *affected* throughout by the culture of the city.

As far as hermeneutic categories dealing with human agency in the Athenian society of the fifth century BC are concerned, they all are going to be inferred, as argued, in connection with factors existing in Athenian ideology and society, all to be utilised to draw conclusions about the possibility of a model agent/self who, in turn, will utilise on stage, another agent, the tragic character. Through the hermeneutic categories applied to each of the characters, on the one hand, the cultural dimension of each one of them is revealed, and, on the other hand, through the individual analysis of each character – of the multiplicity of interaction of each character in every narrative of the play – each self shows one's own awareness and interpretation of interactions and experiences.

Finally, on the subject of the proposed self of the Athenian culture, one might claim that such an argument is quite unfeasible because the Athenian culture is a projection of the Hellenic culture, and therefore, what might be called a model of the Athenian

self is simply a model of the Hellenic self. The above claim may always concern an argument on the Athenian culture, but to what extent is it true? Athens *is* an Hellenic city, yet, Athens might be taken as a model of a city which experiences radical changes during the fifth century – more than the other cities do: besides its politics of democracy, Athens is wealthy and imperially powerful, and as such, the people's lives[20] change quite rapidly since the imperial, wealthy, political city causes them to adopt new roles which come into conflict with what they knew so far, and since the new roles bring new problems they have to deal with. Athens, therefore is in a time of radical transition, and in that sense, Athens may be taken as a city/model different from the others. Besides, the abundance of texts from Greece's classical times generate from Athens are about Athens; this plethora of texts permit historians and anthropologists to draw conclusions about the political and juridical system of Athens, of festivals and burials, of the city's wealth, of the people's habits, and of the number of slaves or foreigners living in the city. If conclusions are drawn for all the above, then, an argument on a proposed model of self of the Athenian culture might be feasible as well. By all means the Athenian society is part of the Hellenic world, but, on the other hand, the degree of information associated with Athens is not comparable with that of any other city. Therefore, such an argument and such a proposal may be claimed.

After this brief encounter with the concept of dramatic character as it is treated here, the cultural approach of the thesis is quite apparent – more than anything else because of the adoption of 'performance', the term which now initiates the discussion on the overall cultural and comparative perspective of this thesis.

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[20] The emphasis is on all people, and not just the citizens' lives.

The correlation of the term 'performance' with Athenian culture is far from original: Rush Rehm in *Greek Tragic Theatre*[21] titles the first chapter 'The Performance Culture of Athens', while Simon Goldhill, authority on Greek literature and culture, and the editor along with Robin Osborne of *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy,* in his 'Programme Notes', suggests that 'performance' may be a useful tool to explore the connections and overlaps between [...] different areas of activities'[22]. That volume examines various activities such as the orators' speeches or the 'Actor's Song in Tragedy'; however, as Francis Dunn correctly points out, 'most essays deal with "performance" only in the formal sense, [...] while others deal with it in the vacuous sense that anything can be labelled as performance'[23]. The fact is characteristic that Goldhill, although in his article he presents an extensive overview of performance studies, he is quick to dismiss Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, who are specialists on performance, because of their lack of historicity, establishing therefore his own connection with culture on decisively historical terms.

Despite the immense importance of the volume, the above perspective on performance may be characterised as no less than limited, as limited would have been any perspective in its exclusion of fundamental areas of discipline which could offer a multi-dimensional interpretation of ways of dealing with culture different from the strict position of one discipline and not of a combination of areas of research. No doubt, any research on the fifth century BC society cannot help but be historical; no doubt, any research on the Greek tragedies cannot help but be literary. But none of

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[21] London: Routledge, 1992; Rehm uses the term to suggest that Greek theatre 'was one kind of performance among many', such as rites of passage or athletics, and later, he adds that everything said or done in Athens was 'in the context of a conventional frame, so that participation entailed both a commitment to the moment and a critical distance from it'(p.3). Rehm's use of the term 'performance' is written here without commenting on it because it seems that the word is used generally, and as such, the reference to Goldhill's use of the term, and the later explanations of the way the term is constituted, is an answer to both views.

[22] Simon Goldhill, 'Programme Notes', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1-29 (p. 1).

[23] Francis Dunn, 'Book Review', *Comparative Drama,35i2* (Summer, 2001), 237-41 (p. 237).

them need to be purely historical or purely literary. Both areas should be examined on the basis of a cultural approach in order for the origins of the performance culture and the complexities of it to be fully understood and analysed.

Such an approach seems to be the only appropriate one for the subject of this thesis since to 'understand human action in its cultural, institutional, and historical milieu requires that we treat it as time – and context – bound, that is, that we explore the particular set of conditions that enabled or hindered the interdisciplinarity'[24]. Human actions and relations ought not to be examined from a merely social, psychological, historical, or anthropological point of view which would likely accept myopic apophthegms, while the interdisciplinarity is not only flexible in its statements about people, 'it is not only multi-vocal, it's not only less certain, but it has a softer feel about it'(Lattuca, p.13).

A further defence of such an approach holds that since the era of research interest is detached from the present, and it is mostly based on written sources – mutilated either by time, ignorance or religious fanaticism[25] – the above method hopes to minimize the existing problems, and to offer a scientifically secure tool of research in the present era in which 'cultures are colliding, interfering with, and fertilizing each other'[26].

In what follows, 'performance' is chosen to be a term equivalent to the Athenian culture the main characteristics of which may be expressed by the terms: social

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[24] Lisa R. Lattuca, 'Learning Interdisciplinarity: Sociocultural Perspectives on Academic Work', in *Journal of Higher Education*, 76 i6 (Nov.-Dec. 2002) , 711-40, (p. 728).

[25] According to Eric Csapo and William J. Slater (*The Context of Ancient Drama*, 4th edn. (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998)), between the 7th century – after the Arabs' coming to Alexandria – and the 11th century, the classical texts became more difficult to be obtained. The main reasons were the system of the Christian education, and the Arabs' decision to end the import of papyrus into Alexandria. A further destruction of ancient texts took place in Constantinople during the Crusaders' invasion of 1206. Besides these historical reasons, between 300-140 BC, scholars in the Alexandrian Museum interfered with the original texts: they had either altered the text in order to update it or to improve it for the stage, or they – the grammarians – corrected it in order to 'establish' the original text. In both cases, the ancient text was not the original one: pp. 18-20.

[26] Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 21.

display, verbal and active communication, competition, sense of other, and ambiguity. In relation to the self *per se*, it is a term used to enclose suggested cultural concepts working as links between the self and the dramatic character, and at the same time, working as hermeneutic categories in relation to human interaction as it is expressed in the Athenian social milieu, and performed on the Athenian stage.

In relation to the self now, the proposed concepts enclosed under the term 'performance' are the following. First, they are the concepts related to one's public image as promoted by the Athenian culture and society, and as accepted by the individual who seems to have a share in this culture and society, politically or economically: it is the concept of public display of action or actions – what would be called *ergon*[27] – related with the impressions/perceptions the individual aims to achieve from one's interactions with others; as such, the concept of display is strongly related with that of competition (*agon)* since the individual wishes to realise the best possible impression by the others, for one's self, through one's actions. Also, it is the concept of Other, or more precisely, the perception the individual holds about the person or the forces/stimuli in one's life which cause him/her to interact, but most often, to react against what the individual perceives as Other, with results unknown to the individual. Eventually though, one's public image – or one's image promoted by the Athenian ideology – comes in conflict with one's personal life since many times, what the city promotes is completely antithetical to what one wishes to do. Therefore, the self/agent experiences conflict or tension between one's duty to the city, and one's perception against that very duty. And the self/agent, besides being in a state of confusion and agony, is also unable to comprehend the situation one has caused by

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[27] The word *ergon* or *erga* is used variously by ancient writers: as Hornblower analyses, for Herodotus, it can mean political actions, building of cities, or monuments; for Thucydides, it means just political or military action (*Thucydides*, pp.30, 31). Here, it is used to refer to a display of an action the self decides to initiate, and the others become aware of; in that sense, the 'action' can be verbal, a powerful display of words, as well as a sacrifice, a political act, or a murder.

his/her actions, even though the original impression of the individual was that he/she was in control .

All these concepts in relation to human behaviour and interaction, and enclosed under the term 'performance' are first analysed as components of Athenian culture, and as originating from the worshipping practices of Greek religion; afterwards, the same concepts are examined in relation to the self, which, because of the 'performance' culture – the term suggested here to refer to Athenian culture – is called 'performing self'.

More specifically, the main lines of argument go as following. In the first chapter, the religious origins of the political ideology of the Athenian culture are explored – after contrasting Athens with other Greek cities – pointing to the specific aspects of the culture, and focusing on the way people in Athens perceive their city life and participate in various social activities such as rituals, or in courtrooms. Next, the concept of the Athenian theatre is explored which, despite negative and sophisticated opinions such as Plato's, proves to be everybody's favourite, and has a profound effect on all classes. It can be inferred then, that the cultural background of the performing self consists of aspects Greek in origin which, due to an amalgam of factors occurring in the Athens, have been transformed into cultural concepts Athenian in content. Theatre in particular might be perceived as the master expression of the culture, and an actualisation of the society – in terms of experience and narrative shared, and narrative performed on stage.

The discussion in the second chapter, after arguing on the concept of the cultural self/agent by referring to recent interpretations in relation to it, focuses on the fact that the self's activities, the self's interpretation of these activities, and therefore, the self's/agent's awareness of one's own self can be analysed through a web of cultural

elements/categories variously expressed in the same way the previously examined original Greek cultural aspects were variously expressed, eventually actualised, and finally transformed into Athenian aspects of culture. The self, therefore, examined through proposed cultural categories expresses variously ways of interpreting one's own agency in a cultural environment. The second part of the chapter deals with and compares dramatic characters as conceived by Sophocles and Euripides who, as receivers/agents of the same social stimuli, create characters according to each one's conception of them. They, as argued, reflect themselves in the plays, since they actualise on stage what is the outcome of objective activities and interactions the tragedians, as agents, experience with others. Lastly, the dramatic character of the Athenian stage, presented verbally and visually on stage may conceptualise agents, interpreted variously through the agent's actions and their outcomes, and, therefore, may actualise on stage a model agent of the performing self.

Finally, the third chapter demonstrates the actualisation of a possible model self emerging out of each of six dramatic characters, and the connection between the performing self and the dramatic character through the concepts/categories applied to interpret all characters and each one of them. The analysis compares and contrasts two tragedians' interpretation of the same elements which compose the model/self: Sophocles' interpretation of concepts, such as those of Other, competition, ambiguity, and conflict, primarily, is discussed in *Electra, Ajax,* and *Oedipus Rex*. Euripides' interpretation of the same categories is discussed in *Medea, Hippolytus*, and *The Bacchae*.

The conclusion reached is that the proposed model of performing self as actualised on stage by dramatic characters – unlike some later Western dramatic characters[28] – is part of the city, and is willed to function in the city because the individual feels to be in control of the city: he/she shares, interacts, and decides about political or religious affairs. The self/agent acts and interacts with the Other, and does not deal with psychological explorations of one's self. At the same time, just like their city – in all its glory and successful time-controlling history – experiences political corruption, defeat, or the plague, the individual experiences failures, and faces the limits of one's abilities, the limits of control over one's problems, and finally, the tragic limits of one's existence.

The above points of the argument under discussion, despite the advantages of the described method of analysis intended to be followed, include certain difficulties.

One problem might be in connection to the term used to refer to the various cities, since the comparative analysis of cultures and theatre involves reference to cities and there is likely to be a problem with the term used to refer to them all: are they going to be considered *polis*, city-states or cities? And to what degree is this relevant.

Exploring the terms '*polis*', 'city', and 'city-state', the conclusion reached is that 'city' is the most appropriate one for this particular work not only because anthropologists use this term with reference to the Greek city-states, but because historians seem to feel comfortable with it, as the title *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* written entirely by classicists confirms. Even Mogens Herman Hansen, an authority on *polis*, and author of a vast number of writings entirely on *polis*, contributes with his work to that particular volume. Another reason is that '*polis*' is a

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[28] Rush Rehm explores the differences between the tragic characters and Western characters and, in brief, he concludes that they progress from 'collective control over behaviour to an internally conceived notion of autonomy': in *Radical Theatre: Greek Theatre and the Modern World* (London: Duckworth, 2003), p.69. In later chapters, the reference to Rehm's argument in this specific study will be more extensive.

diachronic Greek word: in modern Greek it is translated as 'city', whether it is the metropolis of Singapore, a Victorian city of nineteenth-century England, or the city-state of Thebes. On the other hand, in its ancient form, its use varies: Thucydides, when acknowledging the despair of the people of Attica upon leaving their homes and finding refuge in Athens during the Peloponnesian war, chooses to write *polis*, not homes or land when describing their native places that they had left behind. For a historian like Skydsgaard, Thucydides 'could at 2.16.2 use the word *polis* in a wider sense than is normally done'[29]. And for Oswin Murray, 'the concept of the *polis* is largely irrelevant to the way that non-philosophical Athenians viewed their political society'[30]. The term is capable of adjusting itself to the time and factors determining it, and survives in accordance with the individual's need for the Aristotelian 'good life' [31], the life not only of material goods but of moral and intellectual advance in a state where people may develop unknown virtues, may seek a kind of natural growth away from the family or the small community which limited their activity, and may fully realise their true nature only as members of the state[32].

Aristotle or Plato may not have predicted the extent of the growth of their concept of city, or what they were calling city – or what it is thought they were calling city – but, as it happens, and in spite of terms such as 'post-civilization urban agglomeration'[33] which are adopted to characterise certain mega-cities of today, cities will continue to give their name to distinctive cultural forces, and people will continue to associate their goals with the cities where 'the magnification of human energy', and

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[29] J. E. Skydsgaard, 'The Meaning of *Polis* in Thucydides 2.16.2: a Note', in *Polis and Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History*, ed. by Pernille Flensted-Jensen, Thomas Heine Nielsen, and Lene Rubinstein, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2000), pp 229-230 (p. 230).

[30] 'What is Greek about the *Polis*?', in *Polis and Politics*, pp. 231-242 (p. 235).

[31] *Politics* i.28; i38;1252B.

[32] W. Warde Fowler, *The City-State of the Greeks and Romans* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 19th edn. (1st in 1893), p. 59-61.

[33] Aidan Southall, *The City in Time and Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 415.

'splendid vistas of triumphant arches' are displayed next to 'scenes of violence, terrorism and exploitation of urban workers'(Southall, p. 4-5).

And the term adopted here, 'city', is based on 'the idea of concentration, but extends it beyond mere population to include its more profound social, cultural and politico-economical implications'(ibid., p. 8-9). This view with its focus on the concentration of human interactions, 'defines' as he says, 'the most fundamental characteristic common to cities in all time and space'(ibid.), and Athens may certainly be perceived under this definition.

Second, of the ancient texts used, it should be mentioned that compared with the sources relating to Athens, and where the abundance of data offers a wide field of speculation to the researcher, the sources in connection to the Greek cities – such as Argos, Corinth, or Thebes – are extremely limited. Of those existing, most are written by Athenians, and, consequently, carry the Athenians' perspective, even prejudice towards them. Therefore, the conclusions drawn about other Greek cities are limited when compared with conclusions reached about Athens.

In general, all chapters include references to ancient texts, and when possible, information taken from archaeological sites. The worshipping practices of religion in the first chapter, for example, can be traced on temple and sanctuary remains, or the observations of ancient writers with regard to rituals, games, competitions, and performances taking place in various parts of Greece. The texts reporting on Athenian society are mainly written by Athenians, such as Thucydides, or foreigners living in Athens, such as Aristotle. Depending upon the content of the text, and the relevant information available, some texts are perceived more critically than others. For example, Thucydides' funeral speech that he attributes to Pericles has to be perceived quite critically since information related to epitaphs is rather abundant when

compared with the information he writes about the expedition to Sicily during the Peloponnesian war, and also, because public speeches are written to contribute to the ideology of the city. Other writers, such as Plato[34], who did not express the predominant ideology of the city, but who were opposed to it, are employed to show the city ideology and culture from their particular point of view; and then, conclusions are drawn taking these views into consideration. The tragedies are texts as well, but they are not written as funeral speeches, or to report on historical events: they are narratives written to be performed, and, as will be argued, they create a profound effect on the Athenians. And as they will be analysed, they differ from the other texts, because Athenian tragedians write about the lives and feelings of human beings, as for example, Sophocles who writes about what later will come to be called the 'Oedipus complex' which does not concern an Athenian law, or a trick of an Athenian orator, but individuals, whether in Athens BC, or in New York AD, and therefore, tragedies are going to be perceived as a separate corpus.

Lastly, another problem to be explored focuses on the characterization of texts/sources as cultural/anthropological rather than historical, and their validity in a culturally oriented research as opposed to direct social interaction. Although the discussion has focused before on the cultural and anthropological approach adopted here, nevertheless, since the argument deals with an area of study which excludes any present direct association with it, the concentration solely on the separate defence of texts is considered a matter of priority and importance.

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[34] As well as the 'Old Oligarch', sometimes referred to as 'Pseudo-Xenophon', in writings originally attributed to Xenophon, and preserved among his works, but now known only to have been contemporary. (see *'Pseudo-Xenophon': Constitution of the Athenians*, trans. by G. W. Bowersock, in *Xenophon VII: Scripta Minora*, Loeb Classical Library 183 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925; repr. 1993), pp 459-508.

As far as the primary sources are concerned, the historical texts, as argued, are anthropological because the actual connection between history and anthropology is as ancient as Cicero's proclaiming of Herodotus as the Father of History: he can be the archaic father of anthropology as well, obscuring, therefore, the borders between history and anthropology. In that sense, it is worth mentioning that when discussing the terms history and myth, in *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*[35], Paul Cartledge, could have referred to anthropology as a collective scientific field of study. 'At best', he states, 'history and myth are ambiguous terms' (p. 19). Perhaps so, especially since anthropology can include them both, creating a unity out of the ambiguity, or even out of the antithesis as the title of the second chapter 'Inventing the Past: History versus Myth' suggests. Anthropology is a science of the last one hundred and fifty years, definitely not as old as history, but its contribution to analysing human societies, cultures, and identities cannot be left without a reference.

Herodotus, unlike Thucydides, does not depend on inscriptions and coins[36] to show his detailed knowledge of the past; instead, he visits, as he continuously does, Egypt to interview, in this case, the priests, and to present their story:

> I even went to Heliopolis and to Thebes, expressly to try whether the priests of these places would agree in their accounts with the priests of Memphis. The Heliopolitans have the reputation of being the best skilled in history of all the Egyptian.[37]

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[35] Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

[36] Frances R. B. Godolphin 'Introduction', *Herodotus: The Persian Wars*, trans. by George Rawlinson, (New York: The Modern Library, 1942), p. xxii; in Hornblower's *Thucydides* (pp. 88-96), the discussion of the evidence used by Thucydides, as opposed to that used by Herodotus, is quite extensive, but the emphasis is on Thucydides' use of *erga*.

[37] Herodotus, 2.3

His is 'the exposition of the *historie*[38] of Herodotus of Halikarnassos' as he announces in the introductory part of his work, a work linking him with Thales of Miletos, the initiator of the art of enquiry, a century before Herodotus's time. Indeed, although written records start being apparent around 650 (Cartledge, p. 22), the verbal narrative report is the major means of documentation in an environment where the adoration and the function of the myth[39] is ever- prevalent. Herodotus chooses to renounce the tradition by being non-fictional and pro-objective beginning his story in a non-starting time of a mythical past, and by employing three primary methods of exposition: first, he is personally involved in narrations by expressing, for example, his opinion on the reason for the war between Greeks and Persians: 'But, as for me, whether that was how it was or not I shall not go into. I shall begin rather with the man I myself know to have been the first to inflict harm' (1.5.3). Second he presents, when possible, two contradictory reports on the same issue, as the above example of the Egyptians priests has illustrated. Third, he is critical towards certain myths such as the one according to which the Athenian Pisistratos returns to Athens in the very company of the goddess Athena (1.60.3) herself. How would the Athenians, he thinks, they, the cleverest of all Greeks, have believed in such a story? Lastly all his accounts, such as of the battle field of Thermopylae, show his skill in describing the topography of an area.

As such, Herodotus relies on the people he meets, and although he lacks a scientist's methodology of collecting detailed data, he, as a scientist, seeks for causes behind the events and reaches for conclusions; he names, for example, the Persian

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[38] the term means 'enquiry' (Herodotus, 7.96)

[39] 'a myth is a traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance': Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979; repr. 1982), p. 23

Wars as a conflict between East and West[40]. In that sense, his collection of inferences places him among the early researchers' inquiring about the past, while his obsession with observation and listening anticipates the anthropologists' doctrine of 'being there'.

Herodotus, unlike Thucydides, is not a scientific historian, but his in-built compulsion for communication and the satisfaction of curiosity, for travelling and exploration, and for establishing an empirical method of work close to 'ethnographic description'[41] in his place and time, become a project original enough to create 'history'.

Scientists of later times, historians or not, create a history of their own by initiating a certain theory, or by bridging the distance between two disciplines. In the area of twentieth century anthropology, Malinowski conceives of a comparative functionalism, a breakthrough in scientists' dealing with all societies since the terms privileged or non-privileged societies – according to the theory of evolution – are simply suspended. Consequently, formal similarities can be traced among all cultures, but classicists tend to resist and are inclined to be sceptical about whether philosophical texts or tragedies are matters of analysis for anthropologists and not entirely theirs[42]. In the meantime, functionalism enriches its image under the influence of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, and introduces a methodology for a comparative study of the forms of social relationships (Humphreys, p.5). Simultaneously, other scientists such as Franz Boas openly bridge the distance between two disciplines by declaring 'we have to know not only what it is, but also

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[40] Godolphin,, p. xxii

[41] P. F. M. Fontaine, *The Light and the Dark: A Cultural History of Dualism*, vol. II (Amsterdam: J. C. Girhen Publisher, 1987), p. xi

[42] S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1978; repr. 1984), p. 4.

how it came into being'[43], relating the past with the rule of 'it is', linking in this way cause and effect, history and anthropology. He echoes Evans-Pritchard, or actually, the latter sides with him and Alfred Kroeber with the statement that the difference between history and anthropology is that of 'technique and not of method and aim'[44]. His further analysis of the schematic difference between the two calls the problems of history 'diachronic' as opposed to the 'synchronic' problems of anthropology (p. 24), but 'if the present has to be evaluated retrospectively when it becomes the past, the past has to be evaluated in the light of the present'.[45] Evans-Pritchard's paradox predicts one of the trends in humanities during the fifties and on: the interaction between anthropologists and classicists from a daring, new perspective. E. R. Dodds' decision to expose the 'irrationality' of the Greeks (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951), and M. Finley's inclination to apply to Homer Marcel Mauss' writings on the customs of the Kwakiutl Indians (*The World of Odysseus*, 1954), foreshadows the anthropologists' dealings with complex societies of antiquity the way they were traditionally dealing with small-scale societies and tribes – openly and unrestricted, without taking into consideration the Western disposition to relate to ancient civilisations – the Greek civilisation in particular – as if it were a subject sacred because of its superiority or, at least, of the Western conception of its superiority[46].

This direction of theoretical speculation creates a line of anthropologists – calling or not calling themselves ethnographers – in search of ancient lands, or in search of the new people of ancient lands. They are separated into two groups: the ones who generalise about ancient societies such as Greece, comparing its culture and society to

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[43] Boas, F. 'History and Science in Anthropology: a Reply', *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936), 137-141(p. 137).
[44] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Social Anthropology: Past and Present', in *Essays in Social Anthropology* by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (Glencoe: The Free Press of Glencoe, N.Y., 1963), pp. 13-28 (p. 23).
[45] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Anthropology and History', in *Essays in Social Anthropology*, pp. 46-65 (p. 61).
[46] Paul Cartledge, 'The Greeks and Anthropology' *Classics Ireland*, 2 (1995),17-28(p.18).

other cultures of the area, and the others who reason about Greece per se as objectively as they can (Cartledge, p. 3). The interest of both breeds a body of material on social, economic, religious and feminist studies, and their names extend to both sides of the Atlantic: S. C. Humphreys, M. Herzfeld, L. Gernet, J. P. Vernant, J. J. Winkler, D. Cohen, P. Cartledge are some of the practitioners whose dynamic writings validate them as experts in their common field of analyses.

Some years ago, in France, Jacqueline de Romilly and Jean-Pierre Vernant co-edited an anthology with the strikingly connotative, rather invocative title *Pour l'amour du Grec* (Paris: Bayard, 2000): thirty scientists of various disciplines and professions selected a text in Greek and were then called upon to reveal the effect it had on them. The two writers'/editors' purpose is to show that a language unites people culturally rather than geographically[47]. Therefore, whether classicists or anthropologists ,because of their common home language as scientists, they have the ability to alternate instincts and compulsions with scientific methods and theories for dealing with the subject of their research. Consequently, whether historians, ethnographers or anthropologists, they are scientists whose field of work – history or ethnography – creates merely the history of science.

As far as the validity of written sources is concerned, and whether or not they can be a tool of a culturally oriented research, it is argued that the anthropologists' connection with their writings is a matter of certainty rather than one of perplexity. Titles such as the *Golden Bough*, *The Rape of the Nile*[48], or the *Sound and Sentiment*[49], instead of suggesting literary innovations, clearly imply that the margins between anthropology and literature – at least at the title level – are quite tenuous.

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[47] Nikos Bakounakis, *To Vima*, Sun. Sept. 24, 2000, T2

[48] The complete title is: *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archaeologists in Egypt* by Brian Fagan (New York: Scribner, 1975).

[49] The complete title is: *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression* by Steven Feld (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

And it is Malinowski himself who declares triumphantly his anthropological identity on his first encounter with the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands: 'Eureka!', 'It is I who will describe them [...] create them'.[50]His prominence as an author advances with the text, vanishes, even migrates together in their characteristic duality, in their endeavour to recreate reality, to signify messages or to unfold the chaotic cosmos of the human soul.

The multi-dimensional interrelationship between writers, texts and anthropology covers various areas of writing. Mainly texts are written by anthropologists about fieldwork events, texts are used by them to examine past events, and texts – as novels – are written by authors about multi-cultural events perceived ultimately as anthropological texts.

The growth of anthropological writing is probably parallel to the evolution of *homo oikoumenicus*[51], the traveller of the known world, whose words may echo the change of opinion of the *homo scientificus* upon experiencing the Other in his/her field work: Pausanias – second century AD – accepts the challenge of the New and openly admits:

> When I began to write my history, I thought these Greek stories were rather silly, but now that I have reached Arcadia I have decided to treat them from the point of view that the famous Greek wise man told their stories in riddles and not out of stupidity, and I conjectured that what was said of Kronos was a piece of Greek wisdom. So in religious matters this is the principle we shall follow.[52]

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[50] Malinowski, Bronislaw, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* (New York: Harcourt, 1967), p. 150.
[51] Greek word (οικουμενη) for the inhabited and circumscribed word.
[52] Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* II., transl. by Peter Levi. (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 388.

For Loring Danforth – in the twentieth century – the change of opinion involves a funeral scene: 'to my eyes, funeral laments, black mourning dress [...] were [...] exotic. Over the course of my field work these "exotic" rites became meaningful, even attractive alternatives to the experience of death as I had known it'.[53]

The ancient traveller lacks the analysis of the modern ethnographer, but their confessions are hardly non-identical. Danforth elaborates extensively on the matter of being physically and emotionally absorbed by the seeing of the customs of the others as if he worries that his being among them pre-supposes the creation of a new identity necessary for his report of them: 'I was aware that my friends and relatives will die, that I will die, that death comes to all' (p.5-7). His text is anthropological in content, but it hardly exists 'for the world than the world exists for' it, 'like myths and memoirs'.[54] Geertz's apophthegm about texts such as *Tristes Tropiques* further endorses the view that after the reading of it, 'few come away from it without being at least a little bit deconstructed'(p. 21); and although Levi-Strauss believes that the sense of belongingness the anthropologists claim they experience in the field environment is rather fake (Geertz, p. 46), his magnetic style makes the reader's sense of belongingness in the text authentic and original:

> I imagined Brazil as a tangled mass of palm-leaves with glimpses of strange architecture in the middle distance, and an all-permeating sense of burning perfume. This latter olfactory detail I owe, I think, to an unconscious awareness of the assonance between the words *Bresil* ("Brazil") and *gresiller* ("sizzle") [...]. Now that I look back on them these images no longer seem arbitrary. I have learnt that the truth of any given

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[53] Loring Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 5-7.
[54] Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p. 48

> situation does not yield so much to day-to-day observation as that patient and fractioned distillation which the equivocal notion of burning scent was perhaps already inviting me to put into practice.[55]

The observers admit frankly the profound effect that the new place has on their ideas about wisdom, customs, senses and exotic people, but the few who cannot be ignored create as well an audience – eager to read a new text on what are probably old concepts – because the language adopted now is expressive and intense. The evolution of anthropological writing entails for texts, such as the last above, terms such as 'steamy metaphors, luxuriant images' (Geertz, p. 20), and genres – 'records of a symbolic mentality'(ibid., p. 43). Additionally the 'observer/observed relationship can no longer be assimilated to that between subject and object. The objective is a joint production'[56],and, the anthropologists' new challenge is that their subjects have become their audience. As Strathern writes:

> In describing Melanesian marriage ceremonies, I must bear my Melanesian readers in mind. That in turn makes problematic the previously established distinction between writer and subject: I must know on whose behalf and to what end I write (ibid., p. 264).

Subjects who become objects who in turn become audiences, and observers whose observed turn into their observers compose a new terminology for the postmodernist world theatre of anthropology, where writers take on the role of readers as much as readers take on the role of writers. In this apparently novel reality the term writer-

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[55] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (Harmondworth, England, 1976), p. 55-56.
[56] Marilyn Strathern, 'Out of Context: The Persuasive Fictions of Anthropology', *Current Anthropology* 28:3 (June, 1987), 251-280 (p. 264).

reader is not a confusing title, just as the duality anthropologist-author is not a controversial epithet: Levi-Strauss and Ruth Benedict[57] by definition reduce the gap between anthropology and literature, and academia confronts a scientific as much as a literary fact. D. H. Lawrence's and George Orwell's novels are reviewed anthropologically, and Joseph Conrad's writing is more than ever labelled as ethnographic[58]. The setting of his novels, in particular, is compared with an anthropologist's entering into an unknown fieldwork, and his study of characters can be called the monograph of a researcher in a doubly frustrating role: 'the borderland' observer portrayed by an émigré who never underestimated his own 'displacement and defamiliarization'.[59] Perhaps that's why he so eloquently sketches the outsider's survival in a foreign land, almost as a chronicle of an allegory:

> I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks [...]. I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out when I shaved by a fluke of some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims [...]. When you have to attend [...] to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality – the reality I tell you – fades.[60]

Conrad the author mirrors the ancient traveller, the Victorian observer, the deconstructive researcher in a role of broken identities just as 'the process of

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[57] Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, M. Mead were all anthropologist authors.

[58] For other examples, in *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity*, Anthony Cohen reviews the ethnography of novels by V. S. Naipaul, Tom Wolfe and Paul Bailey (London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 180-192), and Richard Handler and Daniel Segal devote an entire book to the ethnography of Jane Austen's novels (in *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Culture: an Essay on the Narration of Social Realities* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1990).

[59] John W. Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 19.

[60] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: A Norton Critical Edition.* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963; repr. 1987), p. 36.

fieldwork always subjects an anthropologist to an attack against his sense of self/identity because he has lost, at least temporarily, those innumerable identifications with home world and significant others that normally sustained his sense of self-identity'.[61] His multi-cultural images foreshadow in a way the individual of the nineties in a tiptoe existence raised in Morocco, living in Paris, and placing his characters in Marrakech[62].

And yet, in this 'post historical, universal and homogenous state'[63] Michael V. Moses, an individual in a tiptoe existence, admits: 'I never lose touch with how [...] history looks from the perspective of an individual human actor struggling against its overpowering flow. It is particularly their[64] concern for individual human tragedy [...] that has drawn me to this study'[65].

The 'individual human actor' and the 'individual human tragedy', synonyms and epitomes of every text, whether anthropological or literal, postmodern or classical, depend on each writer's perspective and epoch, but primarily depend on themselves and exist by themselves through the text. The text exposes the human actor and the human tragedy, the text exposes the age, and names the writer-author, theoretician, dramatist, anthropologist. The writer may scarcely exist as an individual with a personal life and story – Homer and Hippocrates, for example – but certain texts exist under Homer's or Hippocrates' names, and through these texts, their names have an individuality. Homer's name cannot endure without his *Odyssey*, but certain texts – stories initially – survive without their creator's endorsement. The text may be a

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[61] John L. Wengle, *Ethnographers in the Field: The Psychology of Research*. (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1988), p. 153.
[62] The reference is for the author Tahar Ben Jelloun and his novel *L'Enfant de Sable* (*The Sand Child*).
[63] Al. Kojeve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, transl. by Lawes H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1964), p. 237.
[64] He refers to G. W. F. Hegel (*The Philosophy of History)* and Alex Kojeve (*Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*).
[65] Michael Valdez Moses, *The Novel and the Globalization of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xviii.

myth, a dialogue, an epigraph, it is ancient or contemporary; the text speaks, and history and anthropology listen mostly to humans' 'unkillable sense of story [...] to those same events we battle to hold under cognitive control by fitting stories over them, loosening the frame a bit here, tightening it there'[66] [...] and taking 'pleasure in hearing myself tell a story whose end I know: I know and I don't know, I act toward myself as though I did not know'[67]: it is the 'unkillable' bond of humans with their stories – weary and unsurpassed at the same time – because as Tedlock asserts: 'a story is more like a complex ceremony in miniature, encompassing aphorisms, public announcements, speeches, songs and even other narratives'[68]. The story – every story – is men's and women's creation in history, the text-traces they leave behind as a reminder of their anonymous, agonizing, long passing through time in an attempt to reach beingness through stories, texts, discourses of a hypostatic existence. Discourses seeking to be studied,

> not only in terms of their expressive value or formal transformations, but according to their modes of existence. The modes of circulation, valorisation, attribution, and appropriation of discourses vary with each culture and are modified within each. The manner in which they are articulated according to social relationships can be more readily understood[69].

Barthes' 'I am offered a text' (ibid., p.4) converts to anthropology's 'offered a text', a discourse, ready to reveal a 'ceremony in miniature'.

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[66] Fred Inglis, *Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 153-54.
[67] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, transl. by Richard Miller. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 47.
[68] Dennis Tedlock, *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), p.3.
[69] Michael Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. by David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), 197-210(p. 208).

Anthropologists devoted to interpreting ways of life as texts – Geertz, Cassirer, Burke – read and search for meanings, hidden or not, in rituals, myths, metaphors and everyday events and customs. Some, though, are sceptical about problems related to the translation of texts since the anthropologists involved – as non-native speakers – may 'overinterpret or misinterpret'[70] the texts or people talking; they disagree on the theory – the framework used to approach texts within their particular culture:

> anthropology as an interpretive quest will have to be situated
> more wisely within a wider theory of society, and cultural
> meaning will have to be more clearly and carefully
> connected to the real humans who live out their lives
> through them (Keesing, p. 169).

Furthermore, an authentic interpretation of any text, in a dialogue form in which the one party, the text, is in a state of unwilling silence is a matter of concern for few others. They call for 'an openness, an empathy, that seeks windows rather than mirrors'[71].

As an antipode to the previous dilemmas, Karl Marx's attention focuses on the society and the humans' connection with it rather than the problems of the interpretation of the text *per se*. Individuals for him are the recipients of forces, ideas, and impressions that operate on them and create images in their minds. They are, actually, more than individuals; they become social beings of their culture, mirrors, forming reflections out of the connections they have with the material life around them. Their creation, then, is also, and mostly the creation of their epoch, and by their creation-texts, they express the forces of society that are within them. Their creations

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[70] Roger M. Keesing 'Anthropology as Interpretive Quest', *Current Anthropology*, 28 (1987), pp. 161-169 (p.167).
[71] Stephen R. L. Clark, *Aristotle's Man: Speculations upon Aristotelian Anthropology*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p.4.

are the 'phantoms formed in the human brain [...], sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises'[72]. As such, Marx's 'material premises', by excluding the labyrinths of most expressive theories, establish the source of ideas in the concrete, tangible forces of society. The ideas-texts or the story-texts become sensitive and vital microcosms, forms with a life of their own, worlds within people's touch, verifications of the people's social reality.

'Formed phantoms and material premises' – in the one and the same text: is it possible that the distinction between creations and creators is only semiotic, even illusionary?

So far, the introduction has dealt with problems to be encountered in this work; the last, brief note will be on the subject of translation, a delicate and complex matter particularly in reference to ancient texts written in a language barely learnt anymore – texts-orphans as they are – left to speak of their epoch and themselves. Ancient Greek texts are translated in abundance into English by classicists and literary experts originally, but, during the past few decades, anthropologists, linguists, and sociologists among others, claim merit in the discussion of translation, arguing over whether a classicist/historian instead of an anthropologist should be the translator of ancient texts. The discussion, as pointed out already, is extended and terribly challenging, resembling in many ways the one on culture with its multiplicity of definitions and problems. In fact, both cultural and translation studies, as a number of voices declare, are not antithetical to each other: 'the overlap between them are so significant that they can no longer be ignored. The cultural turn in translation studies

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[72] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, ' The German Ideology' in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, Hazard Adams, ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.,1971), p. 632. ('Die Deutsche Ideologie' was written in 1846 but not published until 1932. The text quoted above is from *Literature and Art, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selections from Their Writings* (New York: International Publishers Co., 1947).)

happened more than a decade ago; the translation turn in cultural studies is now well underway'[73].

The problems are immense; however, from the discussion so far, it is rather clear that they are only indirectly connected with this thesis. And as such, besides the mentioning of an awareness of the problem, let it be added that for the most part, and as much as possible, the translations used are editions of the Loeb classical Library – as cited in the bibliography. Especially when the analysis focuses on tragedies, certain words with ambiguous meanings, or directly related to a main point of the thesis, will be given special attention. Also, at times, various translations of the same word are taken into consideration, and the word written is the one thought to be the most appropriate; consequently, certain short translated excerpts of ancient texts coincide only partially with the translation from the source used as cited in the bibliography or in the footnotes.

Finally, as far as names of authors, dramatic characters, gods and mythological figures are concerned, the familiar, Latinised words are used – such as, Aeschylus, Aristotle, Dionysus – while transliterations follow traditional schemes: for example, 'c' for Kappa[74] (K), or e for Hta (H).

The argument which follows is most probably 'frightening and risky' because, as a debater is reported to have said 'to offer arguments in a doubtful and exploratory state of mind, as I'm doing, is something frightening and risky'[75]; but, at least, to offer a dialogue, to aim at a dialogue between ancient and modern, history and anthropology,

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[73] Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, (Clevendon, Eng.: Multilingual Matters, 1998), p. 136.
[74] the only exceptions are the words *kore* – the daughter of Demeter, *kyrios, kyria, and ktete(gyne)* – words which describe the relation between husband and wife in Athens – and *oikos*. For these words, the use of 'c' instead of 'k' seemed out of place.
[75] Plato, *Republic*, 450d8-451a1.

society and tragedy, even Socrates might have agreed that it may lead to an enrichment of both since 'a meaning only reveals its depth once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning [...]. Each retains its own unity and open totality but they are mutually enriched'[76].

[75] M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*(Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press,1986), p.7.

Chapter One

Athens and its Rituals

As indicated in the introduction, the discussion of the links between the Athenian theatre and society, or, more precisely, between performing self and dramatic character, starts with the exploration of their background – Athenian culture – many of the significant characteristics of which, as is argued, originate from the religion of the Greeks. One dimension of the Athenians, the religious one evolves, primarily, from their unity as Greeks, yet, their culture, due to significant social factors, such as political configuration and literacy, ends up being characteristically Athenian. This chapter argues, first, that for Greeks, religion means a continuous, variously expressed doing of – as a performing of – rituals and contests, and as such, a demonstration of their religious practices is considered necessary for the concepts related to these rituals to be described; second, that Athens, more than other Greek cities, initiates or faces political and social challenges, and because of these challenges, religious aspects of performing rituals transform to Athenian city rituals; and third, that the theatrical performance, as a city ritual, is the major expression of the Athenian culture. The conclusion is that because there are definite links between society and theatre, and because the theatrical performance seems to be the major expression of Athenian society, then, the city performance culture, the home of the performing self, in turn, conceptualises itself in the idea of theatre, the home of the dramatic character.

I. Aspects of Greek Religion

An examination of the Greeks' experience and practice of religion reveals, as will be argued, the following areas of concentration which in turn reveal fundamental concepts of Greek culture: religion, along with language, is synonymous with the expression of Greek unity; religion is open to the worshipping of various deities not necessarily Greek in origin; religion means the performance of various rituals, such as sacrifices, or interacting with others in sanctuaries spread over the entire Greek territory; finally, religion means participating in competitions or contests.

The central practices to be examined in this discussion of religion are rituals and the 'performing' of rituals, and let it be said at this initial stage of analysis, that the two terms come close to Victor Turner's contentions on rituals and 'performing'. As such, the assessment of ritual, follows lines of treatment in viewing it as being among the central early expressions of human social organization; it can be defined, somewhat formally, as 'repetitive social practices', expressed in symbolic form as sequences of dance, song, dress, meaningful gestures, dialogue, manipulated objects, among other possibilities, which follow through culturally defined schemes having a direct, signifying relationship with significant sets of ideas or myths recognised by those who act them out, and those who observe them[77]. 'Performing' rituals refers to a social display by a member or members of a community of certain actions, gestures, or rituals, which aim to show to others that certain signs should be interpreted by them the way the members who initiate the actions mean them to be interpreted, or that certain gestures should be interpreted the way they are meant to be interpreted by others, regardless of the feelings of those who initiated them prior to the gestures or

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[77] Emily A. Schultz and Robert H. Lavenda,, p. 145.

the signs[78]. Additionally, both these terms signify the fact that the discussion focuses, at first, on the religiousness of the archaic Greek societies, and therefore, it adopts Durkheim's most influential argument about the significance of religion in early societies 'whose members are united because they imagine the sacred world and its relation with the profane in the same way, and because they translate this common representation into identical practices'[79].

Proceeding now with the discussion of this chapter, religion is a strong element of Greekness and communication. First, the Greeks' unity under religion is recorded by Herodotus during one of the greatest challenges in the Greek world, during the Persian wars[80], the time when most of the major Greek cities fought united mainly under the leadership of the Athenians, and forgetting for a while, in a rare moment of their history, their usual disputes[81]. Second, religion is an element of communication among Greeks measured by the common language of the common poets, Homer, Hesiod and Pindar: from the Black Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar[82], wherever there is a territory characterised as Greek, the poets, according to ancient writers and archaeological findings, are symbols of unity and coherence because they are accepted as the ones who define the genealogy of the gods, their function, title and

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[78] Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure: The Psychology of Social Institutions* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1953; repr. 1964), p. 55.

[79] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995), p. 41.

[80] At some moment during the Persian wars, the Spartans, fearing that the Athenians might go with the Persians, sent a delegation to persuade them to stay loyal to the 'Greek cause'. The Athenians answered that the Spartans should not have this fear for a number of reasons, the first of which was 'the destruction of our temples and the images of our gods [...]. Again, there is our common brotherhood with the Greeks: our common language, the altars and the sacrifices of which we all partake, the common character which we bear' (Herodotus 8.144.2 trans. A. D. Godley)). Other moments of unity under religion are recorded as well.

[81] The Persian Wars (500-c449 BC) are written by Herodotus, but many epigrams and tributes are written about the heroes of the wars, and the cities participating in them.

[82] M. I. Finley, 'Forward', in *Greek Religion and Society*, ed. by P. E. Easterling and L. V. Muir. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. xiii-xx (p. xv).

images (Herodotus, 2.53), yet, never are Homer's, Pindar's or Hesiod's poems considered to be sacred [83].

Clearly, poets are a means, the only ones, for all Greeks to know the myths about gods, and to accept them as an aspect of their religion. In fact, Greek religion, in contrast to Christianity, is not 'revealed': prophets do not exist, words such as 'sin' or 'faith' do not have a place, and God does not declare his divine omnipresence[84]. As such, the only appropriate thing to say about the Greeks is that they do not believe[85] in Gods, but they acknowledge[86] them: 'pray to them, sacrifice to them, build them temples, make them the object of cult and ritual' (Gould, p.209), and they never send an army to war without a *mantis*[87]. Priests' authority to perform rites and be custodians in temples is given to them by the city or is inherited by them as a family obligation, but the priests' 'pronouncements are never binding'[88]. Furthermore, prayers are only a part of the poets' epics, while myths[89] never cease to be open-ended stories borrowing and adopting elements from other religions or simply declaring their endless improvisatorial character (Gould, p. 210).

Next to myths, another element which demonstrates the openness of the Greek religion, is the fact that gods are of any nationality, not necessarily Greek in origin

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[83] In his detailed study of Greek religion, Burkert analyses the strong association of poets with religion by pointing to the fact that, the later rise of philosophy involves *theologia,* the speaking about gods, an exclusive right of the poets before philosophers. With philosophy, the difference is that religion is perceived as theory, but in practice, religion is still a form of behaving and an institution.
As for E. R. Dodds, he claims that the 'familiar saying that Homer was the "Bible of the Greeks" is true only in the sense of Homer's influence on the development of Greek literature'. (E. R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 142.)

[84] John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory and Exchange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 209.

[85] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, transl. by John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 305.

[86] θεους νομιζειν

[87] an interpreter of dreams; relevant information is found in Herodotus (7.219.1, 228.3-4, 9.33-5), and Thucydides 6.69.2, 7.50.4.

[88] W. M. Blake Tyrrell and Frieda S. Brown, *Athenian Myths and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 75.

[89] According to Burkert, myths are 'a complex of traditional tales[...]the truth [of which] is never guaranteed and do not have to be believed' (p. 8).

but adopted by Greeks to be perceived as Greek, and their oracles' ambiguous words[90] are received with a lot of respect by grateful pilgrims always willing to listen to a prophetic message from a god to the people, a kind of holy communication between them and an anthropomorphic spirit eager to care about their fears, sufferings, and probably suggest solutions. Apollo's oracles and the Delphic shrine hold a hegemonic role, as all sources verify, and are panhellenically recognised, with crowds of people visiting constantly in an order of consultation regulated by the characteristics of the city: Greeks before barbarians, Delphians before Greeks[91].

The above points of the Greek religion outline the need and efforts of people to interpret the unknown[92] and to learn to endure epidemics and death almost on a daily basis[93], and, also, they outline the particular way Greeks acknowledge their gods, and the centrality of religion in their lives: more than anything else, Greeks express a need to be part of a system of communication – between the individual and the god, or between the individual and the others. The individual, in the role of a centre of a system of circles, is and feels detached from but also dependent on the peripheries of the centre, the others' and the gods', familiar, contradictory, even hostile peripheries.

Besides its long array of myths, and its gods, its rituals, and its contradictions, Greek religion is based on a fundamental element of communication, the existence of which is meant to exorcise any hostility: reciprocity, the doing of good by one to another, and the repayment of that good (Gould, pp. 217, 226) is expressed

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[90] Robert Garland, *Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks* (Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 75.
[91] Cristiane Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis Religion?' in *The Greek City From Homer to Alexander*, ed. by Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 296-322 (p. 298).
[92] Clifford Geertz in 'Religion as a Culture System' (in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 87 – 125) writes: 'Bafflement, suffering and a sense of intractable ethical paradox are[...] radical challenges [...] with which any religion, however primitive, which hopes to persist, must attempt somehow to cope' (as cited in Gould, p. 208).
[93] After the work of four years on the island of Thasos, the Hippocratic doctor reports 25 deaths out of 42 cases (Hippocrates' *Epidemics* 1,3 in G. E. R. Lloyd, ed., *Hippocratic Writings*, trans. by J Chadwick (London: Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 87, 138).

conclusively by the animal sacrifice[94] to gods, the central ritual of the Greek religion, of a series of rituals which affect the people's relation with others, even with themselves. Through participation, they become part of the rituals and recognise them – moments of reference in their familiar environment of the sacrificial ceremony which becomes part of them since all rituals are part of their group interaction.

Sacred as it is, the ritual of sacrifice involves 'the invocation of invisible powers', but primarily, it is a demonstration of acts 'to be performed in set sequence and often at a set place and time – sacred insofar as every omission or deviation arouses deep anxiety and calls forth sanctions.'(Burkert, p. 8). And although the animal sacrifice is not a uniquely Greek ritual, it might be useful here to compare it with the description, as reported by Herodotus – another of his comparisons between Greeks and non-Greeks – of the way Persians perform the ritual of sacrifice: such a comparison mainly reveals the importance of the ceremonial details for Greeks, and the dominant position the meal experience plays in the Greek ritual.

According to Herodotus (1.131-132), the Persians do not 'raise' altars, they do not light any fire, they do not accompany the ceremony with any musical instrument, they do not use any wreaths, and they do not bake bread. Unlike the Greeks' sacrifice, the Persians have a particular member of the priesthood to perform the sacrifice who does not separate the animal portions for gods from the portions to be consumed by the participants, and the animal's intestines from the other parts of its body. Finally, unlike Greeks, the Persians boil the meat, and it depends on the priest to distribute or not the sacrificial animal to the people. Consequently, besides all the mentioned differences, the Persians do not sit to have a meal after the sacrifice as the Greeks do.

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[94] *Iliad* 1.447-74, 2.402-31; *Odyssey* 3.418-72, 14.412-56; Aristophanes' *Peace*, 937-1126.

The above brief description of the Persian way of sacrifice by Herodotus is part of his way of dealing with the definition of Greekness – by referring to the other people's way of life, and reaching conclusions about Greeks through the comparison with the Others – rather than pointing out differences among purely religious matters; nevertheless, the Persian act of sacrifice shows that although the ritual is important for them, it does not mean for them what it means and symbolises for Greeks: sharing and communicating primarily with the members of the community; for Persians, it means – mostly – communicating merely with gods.

Returning to the Greek mode of sacrifice, the animal-to-be-sacrificed, most of the time, is a domesticated one, a symbol of the togetherness of the family with the victim, but also a symbol of the togetherness of the participants in a communal feast[95]. Or the animal may serve as an 'intermediary between the world of the person who sacrifices and the world of the recipient' (ibid.), between the violent act of the sacrifice and the communal act of eating (ibid.), or between the dinner of the mortals and the symposium of the gods – on the same spot, but not too close to the first[96]. The answers may all be affirmative, but are they? As it is, the only safe assumption to say is that any animal sacrifice leaves space for ambiguities because more than a purely sacred act it is an act of communication, as all religious rituals are for Greeks, and to a large extent, ambiguity is an element of communication.

The animal sacrifice[97] is certainly widespread, but it is not the only ritual[98]. Fundamental however, let it be added here, is the element of blood in this ritual, and

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[95]Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Cambridge: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.286.

[96] Michael Jameson, 'The Spectacular and the Obscure in Athenian Religion', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 321-340 (p. 327).

[97]Herodotus' description of the Persians' sacrifice points indirectly to some details of the Greeks' way of sacrifice, yet, a brief description of an animal sacrifice will emphasise further the ceremonial aspects of the ritual:

consequently, once again, the feeling of solidarity arising not only out of the participation in the ritual, but of the shared guilt for an act of aggression initiated by the community which purifies itself through the splashing of water, and directs the order of events and of participants (Burkert, p. 59) during the sacrifice[99].

Sacrifice, the first ritual discussed, underlines, as is argued, the character of Greek religion, the ceremonial one, the main factor in the formation of the communities as well as the roles of the individuals in them. Religion, as a social event, leaves its sign on the ceremonial political reality of the city-to-be-formed, and on the formation of a self that interacts with the state and the others on a basis of a code originating from the religious principles of Greeks.

Another kind of ritual which points to the fact that Greeks acknowledge and practice religion rather than theorising about it, includes, besides the animal sacrifice, ceremonial overtones and mystical messages related to certain myths known to all Greeks; consequently, the participants are not involved only in a single central event, such as a sacrifice, but in a sequence of central events, such as a sacrifice, a long procession, even an elaborate performance of the myth itself. More specifically, in

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> The animal chosen is entwined with ribbons, with its horn gilded. A procession escorts the animal to the altar [...]. A blameless maiden at the front of the procession carries on her head the sacrificial basket in which the knife for sacrifice lies concealed beneath grains of barley or cakes. A vessel containing water is also borne along, and often an incense burner; accompanying the procession is one or several musicians [...]. The goal is the stone altar or pile of ashes laid down or erected of old. Only there may and must blood be shed [...]. All stand around the altar. [...] The sacrificial knife is now uncovered [...]. The slaughter now follows [...]. As the fatal blow falls, the women must cry out in high, shrill tones. [...] The animal is skinned and butchered [...]. The inner organs [...] are roasted [...]. To taste the entrails immediately is the privilege and duty of the innermost circle of participants. The inedible remains are then consecrated [...]. Cake and broth are also burned in small quantities. Once [...] the fire has died down, the preparation of the actual meat meal begins, the roasting or boiling [...]. The skin falls to the sanctuary or to the priest (Burkert, p. 56-57).

[98] Besides blood rituals, there are fire rituals, gift, fruits and votive offerings, etc.

[99] Nothing is established without the use of blood, and for the Greeks, in contrast to Jews (Burkert, p.59), blood is not a taboo: many times, on vase paintings, blood stains can be seen on the side of white-chalked altars, and as it follows, 'the asylum of the altar stands in polar relation to the shedding of blood; the shedding of human blood constitutes the most dangerously similar contrast to the pious work'(ibid).

rituals which include myths, therefore a text, the participants become actors of the text, become the text themselves, and seek to interact with the divine without meditating about it, but with communicating through the text with them. Their particular participation in the myth does not depend on individual preferences, but on hierarchies, such as age, and what each one does affects all as a 'common body of ritual performance'[100]. The wholeness of the community, in other words, becomes one with the wholeness of the myth; or the wholeness of the one symbolises the wholeness of the other The ritual which includes a myth, along with others as well, is therefore, more than a religious act, a sacrifice or a myth. It is strictly a ceremonial, mystical act of celebrating their communion .

One such ritual, devoted to Demeter, the most famous of all, occurs in Eleusis, and includes a long, ritualistic celebration in memory of a grievous event: Eleusinian mysteries take place in honour of Demeter and her daughter – the Kore – and deal with the two women's personal drama of chthonic powers and blood ties. The myth, the seizure of the daughter by Hades, equates marriage with death[101], and it is unique in the Mediterranean area in its originality, 'in imagining an agricultural scenario of death and rebirth that featured an exclusively female relationship'(ibid.), a story which makes the participants experience[102] an awe for the tragic events through an actual viewing of the drama – expressed as such by the writer who urges worshippers

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[100] Richard Schechner, 'From Ritual to Theatre and Back', in Richard Schechner and Mady Schumann, eds., *Ritual, Play, and Performance: Readings in the Social Sciences/Theatre* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 196-230 (p. 211).

[101] Remarkable for its hidden parameters, this bond between the two. the union and the repeated separation, and the dark male presence, is a ritual about the women's vital role in marriage and within nature (Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*: *Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 10).

[102] Burkert notices that Aristotle uses the verb, '*pathin*' which signifies the participation, as a kind of suffering of the participants (*Greek Religion*, p 286).

to go to Eleusis 'even if your [sic] life is sedentary [...], go [...] to see those nights of the great Mysteries of Demeter: your [sic] heart shall become free of care'[103].

And they go[104], from Attica and from far off, and they walk for fourteen miles, from Athens to Eleusis to have the experience and, as recorded in various ancient texts, to see 'the sight' and 'the wonder' which gods take care of (Pausanias 5.10.1). The site belongs to the jurisdiction of Athens[105] (Aristotle, *Ath. Politia* 57.1-2), and two families, the Eumolpidai and the Kerykes, are in charge of the mysteries: the first provides the hierophant, the second the torch-bearer (Burkert, p. 285). In the autumn month of Boedromion, the procession of a crowd of people heads off towards Eleusis[106] escorting the priestesses carrying the sacred objects. When the crowd reaches the boundary between Athens and Eleusis, a group of masked figures makes fun of them by imitating, according to the myth, 'Iambe or Baubo who had cheered up'(Burkert, p. 287) the wandering Demeter in search of her daughter. The next night is the climax of the secret rites[107]:

> When it is completely dark, the initiates file into the sanctuary, the wall on right blocking from view the area of the Mirthless Rock. When they reach the doorway in this wall, perhaps they are able to look in as they pass and see [...] a deeply unsettling sight: the

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[103] Crinagoras 35 (in A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 218-219).

[104] According to Burkert (p. 277), Greek mysteries by definition were open to all citizens and non-citizens alike, but not to murderers, or barbarians (p. 286).

[105] Very often, the Eleusinian mysteries are examined in connection with the rituals of the city of Athens, but, due to their significance and appeal, and due to the fact that the main ceremony does not take place in Athens, they are included here, in the section about Greek religion.

[106] A complete account of the archaeological site of Eleusis is given in G. E. Mylonas' *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961; repr. 1974).

[107] Literary sources are limited as to information on the Mysteries, but the vase painters are not. The best image of the events are on a vase, the Regina Vasorum, in St. Petersburg (Kevin Clinton, 'The Sanctuary at Demeter and Kore at Eleusis', in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, ed. by Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hagg (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 110-120 (p. 115). There is much scholarly writing on the relation between Aristophanes' *Frogs* and the actual set of events in the Mysteries. According to A. W. Bowie (*Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 228), 'the chorus is indeed composed of Eleusinian initiates.'

goddess sitting on the rock in sorrow. [...] they hear lamentations […]. They pass by, walk on up to the Telesterion[108] […] in search of Kore […]. All the while, the hierophant keeps sounding a gong […] Kore emerges, guided by Eubuleus, […]. Suddenly the Telesterion opens, and hierophant stands in the doorway, […].The initiates enter, passing from darkness into light, coming from thousands of torches […]. (Clinton, p. 118-9).

The sacrifice takes place the following day, and on the twenty-third of the same month, the initiates return to Athens (ibid., p. 119), after experiencing a most elaborate ritual, and a sacred myth they all feel fortunate to be part of.

Along with rituals like the above which demonstrate the active, ambiguous, and sharing way Greeks experience their religion, another word almost synonymous with religion is the word 'game', or 'contests': they take place in sanctuaries where people develop significant outdoor activities related to principles of competition and honour, but also of ideas about communion of the community, order of acts, sacred altars, and set of sanctions. First, a brief analysis of the concept of sanctuaries[109] reveals major dimensions of the Greek religion: it initiates a set of performances in a religious micro community, and also, many of these sanctuaries transform into places of contests and games in the name of certain deities.

Besides worshippers, historians and literary texts relate the presence of various statesmen at sanctuaries[110] in cases where they find themselves in difficult or even

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[108] palace

[109] A sanctuary according to the Greek religion is a 'sacred space centred around an altar, sometimes including another sacred focus such as a tree or stone, a spring or cave.' (Christiane Sourninou-Inwood, 'Early Sanctuaries, the Eighth Century and Ritual Space: Fragments of a Discourse', in *Greek Sanctuaries* pp. 1-17 (p.11)).

[110] The Greeks visit prominent or remote sanctuaries from the island of Samothrace in Northern Greece where mystic, mysterious orgies take place, to Taenaron, the southern edge of Peloponnesus; a plethora of sanctuaries provide plenty of evidence for their dominance and the people's occupancy of them. Actually, In *Greek Sanctuaries*, thirty-five pages (pp. 192-227) are devoted to the bibliography of the

threatening situations[111]; and the evaluation of new sources and discoveries provide information about girls who do not want to wed the man their families have chosen for them, orphans who find a guardian suggested by the priests of a sanctuary, inhabitants of Aetolia who in time of war deposit their belongings and food in a remote sanctuary[112]: all of them use the holy space as an asylum because a sanctuary is an asylum[113]. Everything inside it is the holy territory of the god since it belongs to the god, and in such a place, the security of the pilgrims is guaranteed. Second, Greece consists of independent cities and districts, and the moment someone crosses the border of a district, that person is out of the jurisdiction of local justice.

The sanctuaries, besides being places of protection for negotiators, athletes, people who travel around on a regular basis, they are solutions in case somebody is persecuted; the person can hide in it, but not for long. Instead, one can present reasons for his/her coming, and then, the sanctuary is obliged to help the refugee, and the ritual which follows gives the opportunity to the person to present the case and to be involved in the rite of *hiketeia*: he becomes an *hiketes*, she becomes an *hiketis*. As such, they are not refugees anymore, but official suppliants, and the priest is their legal adviser (Sinn, p. 90-1).

Apparently, worshippers and suppliants coexist in the sanctuaries[114], and although excavations at all the sanctuaries[115] cannot lead to safe conclusions about the

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Greek sanctuaries on the mainland, the islands, in the area of the Asian Minor or in the Western colonies; about seven pages are devoted to the sanctuaries of Athens and Attica.

[111] Herodotus 5.71, Thucydides 9.13, Pausanias 1.8.2f

[112] Ulrich Sinn, 'Greek Sanctuaries as Places of Refuge' in *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 88-107 (p. 90, 102).

[113] *asylia* means prohibition against stealing.

[114] Except for the slaves, suppliants and worshippers eat in the same eating places and are permitted to go to the same lodging areas (Sinn, p. 95).

[115] The addition of the following information on sanctuaries indicates their centrality and importance in the lives of people in various areas of Greece. First, according to Herodotus, in Samos, in the sanctuary of Artemis, when the pursuers of three hundred boys threatened to starve them to death, the Samians were more than willing to include the refugees in the ritual meals (3.48). Second, in the area of Peloponnesus, thirty dining rooms, constructed at the end of the fifth century, are found in one single sanctuary, that of Demeter and Kore in Acrocorinth which can hold about two hundred people;

pilgrims' remaining in them overnight, the extensive number of lamps at Acrocorinth, in one of the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore, suggest night activities by the worshippers, just as in another sanctuary in Attica, literary sources insist that the women taking part in the Thesmophoria spend three days and three nights at the temple (Bookidis, p. 47). At Olympia, though, the findings of the number of guest houses, bath installations, wells and shops (Sinn, p. 95) clarify what is true of all sanctuaries: they are communities with regulations and activities where people feel safe and free to go, and perhaps their pilgrimage itself is an excuse for some of them to cross the borders of their town's closed territories, be justifiably daring, travel somewhere else, and – yes, compete with somebody else. The sanctuaries, in a way, mirror what will follow later – the becoming of the large communities of the cities, functioning as organized centres of activities with divine and sacred purposes.

As for competitions, the Greeks' obsession with them is depicted in myths, inscriptions and vases, and one could justifiably argue that it is an element of unity, like their language and religion, or it is simply an element of their Greekness.

Apparently, the entire Hellenic region holds an inconceivable number of contests – from handicraft to dance (Burkert, p. 105), mostly under the jurisdiction of sanctuaries[116]. Athletic contests, *agones*[117], as early as the Bronze age, begin with chariot fights, and they, along with foot-races are the most well known from the

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buildings of that size are a rather common sight since ritual banquets are the most common characteristic of any festival (Nancy Bookidis, 'Ritual Dining at Corinth' in *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 45-61 (p. 45,47)). In this one, three areas are distinctive: 'dining is restricted to the lowest of the three terraces, sacrifice and the dedication of offerings to the middle terrace, and initiation [...] in a small rock-cut theatre to the upper terrace.'(Ibid., p. 47) As the findings indicate, areas for cooking, washing and sitting are added at some point, but nothing implies that all the citizens of Corinth can participate in the banquet: some kind of selection must have limited the number of people permitted to pass in, probably a selection by gender, a restriction not applied at Eleusis the Mysteries of which are attended by all, even by slaves (Bookidis, p. 50).

[116] For example, on Lesvos, during the annual festival in the sanctuary of Zeus, Dionysus and Hera, a beauty contest for the girls is one of the most popular events (Alcaeus 130 (in *Greek Lyric I*, trans. by David Campbell), Paus. 7.2.4.4, *Iliad* 9.129), and by all means, no one can forget that notorious beauty contest, the very cause of the Trojan War.

[117] *agon* means contest and war.

Classical Age (Burkert, p. 106). All games are associated with sanctuaries, but vase paintings inform about the relation of the games to funeral rituals[118] as well, perhaps as symbols of the 'transition from an aspect of death to an aspect of life'(Burkert, p.106).

Many are the ancient reports about sacred communities transformed into people's athletic communities, the religious character of which in the long run fades away for the sake of *agon*, for the sake of a game with a set of rules, spectators, and winners. In fact, four particular shrines[119] claim the title as the major Greek festivals, meeting places for game activities of a highly competitive nature in athletics, music, dance, theatre 'held after the gathering in of the harvest [...] because it was at this time that the people had most leisure.'[120] In Olympia, originally and officially, the worshippers'[121] arrival was a pilgrimage in the name of Zeus, to an open-space celebration around the deity's altar, in a social interaction with roles for priests, women and animals. Yet, could the *agones* be a pre-war exercise as well, a paramilitary kind of practice where the winners and the losers have a role as representatives for their cities in a race for personal and state glory, a political race of political importance with no place – except the 'back streets' as Pindar writes, for the 'hateful return, the dishonouring tongue'[122] for the losers? In another ode, Pindar praises the winners by pointing out the bitter outcome of the victory for the defeated:

> And now for times you came down with bodies beneath you,
> (You meant them harm),

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[118] *epitaphios agon*

[119] at Olympia and Nemea for Zeus, at Isthmus for Posidon, and in Delphi.

[120] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 8-9, 1160a 25-8

[121] Many celebrities of the era seem to participate in the games, and according to Thucydides, Alcibiades is one of the athletes. Officially, his arrival in 416 BC is a pilgrimage as well, and yet, his participation in the Olympic games in seven chariots, taking the second and fourth places, as well as the crown, reflected his hope – quite justifiably – to gain support for his radical and polemic ideas (Thuc., 6.16).

[122] Olympian 8.68, *The Odes of Pindar*, trans. by C. M. Bowra, Penguin Classics L209 (New York: Penguin Books, 1983).

No glad home-coming like yours

[…]

In back streets out of their enemies' way

They cower; disaster has bitten them.[123]

It appears as if the ideology surrounding the winners and the losers is the ordinary way of life which controls the order of people's consultations with the Delphic oracle, or the war in a far-off colony, an ideology not only for the sake of participating in the games, but for the sake of victory as well.

From the above description, it seems that the religious shrines and rituals converted into competitive shrines and rituals 'performed in set sequence and often at a set place and time […] establish the solidarity of the closed group' just as religious rituals do establish solidarity[124].

So far, all these values, centres, activities in connection with the notion of religion throughout the Greek territory demonstrate the role religion plays in the way the Greeks identify with each other, the way they worship their gods, and their dependence on rituals. The various practices show as well their ability to create new terms, new activities, new rituals out of the old ones, almost in the form of a recycling principle and behaviour, which gives them the excuse and the right to 'acknowledge' their gods, their cities, their Greekness, their bodies, and, most of all, themselves.

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[123] Pythian 8.81-7 (ibid.)

[124] In a last note on sanctuaries and their vital, continuous importance in the Greek world, let it be added here, that in other religious shrines, the cities demonstrate the solidarity of the group by establishing their treasuries, a political act of definition primarily utilised by the cities in colonies in need of a connection with a mainland sanctuary such as in Delphi or Olympia thus avoiding close contact with the mother city, for reasons of independence. Finally, another act in connection with the institution of sanctuaries is the passing of the administrative control of the Delphic sanctuary from the local community to the Aphictyony – a league of cities – 'essential to the development of formalized pan-Hellenic institutions'(Catherine Morgan, 'The Origins of Pan-Hellenism' in *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp.18-37, p. 30). And the change of status is celebrated with games (Paus 10.7.45), the Pythian ones in Appollo's honour.

Primarily, however, it shows their obsession and willingness to share and communicate constantly with each other on the basis of religion and language.

To summarise, therefore, certain main conclusions drawn from the examination of religion, for Greeks, it means unity with all Greeks; additionally, it means believing through acting: Greeks do not theorise about gods – they sacrifice, pray, carry objects, travel, and perform rituals; and finally, religion means competing in contests or games – *agones*.

These main points – Greekness, acting, unifying, sharing, and competing – dominant as they are, carry with them certain shadow parameters which, when removed from their purely religious context and connections, and perceived in their social/anthropological dimensions, may become decisive concepts – not just parameters – when discussed in relation to their development and transformation into city concepts, and eventually as concepts for perceiving human interactions . One might infer – it is only argued here, not developed – that the concept of Greekness invites a strong sense of non-Greekness, of the Other – who might be the barbarian, the Persian, the Egyptian – who does not share the same poets, myths, or rituals, and does not fight for the same shrines. And yet, contrary to the strong sense of the Other, the paradoxical concept of the Greek religion is that it is the same Other from whom Greeks borrow a number of gods such as Dionysus. Another concept is that of ceremonial acting and sharing religious rituals – instead of exercising a low profile religious activity and meditation – which shows a preference for public, open display. Lastly, the widespread habit of competition, besides carrying the element of conflict and the concept of Other, encloses a definite sense of ambiguity – just as the act of sacrifice – and reversal, since the outcome of the *agon* is never certain, and victory or defeat may reverse themselves depending on a number of unpredictable and

uncontrollable factors. These suggested parameters inferred out of the main concepts surrounding Greek religion will be investigated in relation to their city content later in the chapter, and eventually will lead to the discussion of the performing self.

After discussing the dominant aspects of Greek religion in order to arrive at conclusions about Athenian culture in which the same aspects dominate in the forms of people's interaction in the city, the next main point concerns the reasons responsible for, and the main characteristics of, the development of Athenian culture which seems to be quite distinctive when compared with those of other Greek cities – even though all of them inherit and share the same religion.

II. Athens in the Hellenic World

The ritualistic perception of religion, whether in Greece or elsewhere – when investigated by anthropologists or sociologists – invites, as expected, discussions on the foundations of this perception. For many, the causes have to do with the fact that very early groups of people, before their being communities but only constituents of large kinship units, consisted of members with specific roles they knew to their fullest – practical ones, such as hunting, or mystical ones, such as praying; but whatever the role, each member was totally familiar with it, and she/he had become one with it for the sake of the family group. Religion, according to this view, was not a separate form, or there was 'no religious organization separated from family and band'[125]. The familiar roles relating to religion became, as most observers endorse, second

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[125] Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 109.

nature and a need of people to associate their notion of religion with the performing of rituals. Yet, when discussions concentrate on the processes which turned small communities into cities, or religious performances into more complicated city performances, and theatrical performances, then, discussions vary: the cities are not small communities, the roles of people are more complex than those acted out earlier, and interactions become multi-dimensional. The factors, therefore, leading to the transformation may be multi-dimensional, as well – economical, political, literate, or factors relating to technology. However, all emphasise the fact that such changes did occur – to what extent however?

In the case of Greek cities, the transformation is political. Taking always into consideration the fact that collective dimensions of behaviour appear before the public[126] ones (*demosia*), P. Schmitt-Pantel's analysis of the formation of the city in classical times might be the most insightful: as she asserts, initially, collective activities, or shared experiences with equal distribution of a sacrificed animal, were most probably taking place only among the *aristoi* – the powerful, the best ones – of the archaic city. Later a large heterogeneous group emerged differentiating the standards of the city, and leading to the end of the archaic period and the rise of the classical one during which, after a long process involving new ideas and selected traditions, 'the group of citizens learned to think about social relationships in abstract terms', and eventually, these had led

> to the specialization of certain pre-existing collective practices
>
> in the expression of political power. The choice of these practices
>
> may result from the fact that they simplified the task of putting

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[126] The earliest relevant appearance of the word *demosios* appears in Solon's (6th cent.) lines from a poem: 'For it comes upon the entire *polis* like some relentless wound which quickly turns into evil slavery which in turn raises civil strife and slumbering war [...]. Thus *public* ruin (*demosion dikon*) invades each man's own home.' (in *Greek Elegic Poetry*, f 4.17 – 19.26)

> this attempt at egalitarian abstraction into concrete form [...].
>
> These activities give the framework of an autonomous domain
>
> which we are in the habit of calling the political domain.[127]

In Greek cities, 'political equality is no longer expressed by participation in the banquet, but rather, as Schmitt-Pantel concludes, in the assembly'(p.208).

Additionally, arriving at a somewhat similar conclusion about the Greek cities, if one follows the history of cities in Asian empires, in contrast to them, the Greek cities develop their own self-government, and people are not masses under a central authoritarian regime, but they gradually become associated with the idea of their city perceived as a city where the non-elites can have the opportunity, to one degree or another, to affect the decisions of the elite. And as Schachermeyr may add based on his analysis of Greek cities, their political autonomy and the new social organization are associated with the 'emancipation of intellectual life from Greek mythology' which brought along with it the emergence of audiences trying to interpret or even criticise royal systems of governing rather than accepting them as *de facto*.[128]

Athens, Greek though it was, follows and creates its own route in the history of cities due to certain factors which differentiate it from the other cities of the era. And in this section, it is argued that the factors which contribute to the transformation of religious rituals to civic dramas, and eventually to theatrical performances – to what is called Athenian culture – are not only economic as one theory claims, but ideological ones the Athenians have created out of the particular concept of their city, the politics of *demos*, and literacy. The combination of these two factors is the reason of Athens being *the* Athens of the Hellenic world.

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[127] Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, 'Collective Activities and the Political in the Greek City', in *The Greek City*, pp. 199-214 (p. 208).
[128] Fritz Schachermeyr, 'The Genesis of the Greek Polis', in S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Political Sociology* (New York N Y: Basic Books, 1953; repr. 1971), pp. 195-202 (p. 201).

Compared with other Greek cities, Athens, during the fifth century and beyond, establishes a far too strong economy. The reasons for it are, according to Finley and his extensive studies on Athenian economy, that poor citizens are given land in the colonies, and are occupied as rowers in the Athenian navy, solving in this way, to a large extent, their economic problem[129], while the rich have the chance to become richer by investing variously in colonies. Furthermore, the city has revenues, such as the Lavrion mines, and the tributes paid by allies for their protection therefore, it can afford to pay poor citizens, again, to be a part of the government, as jurors or to hold other positions, without asking for excessive taxes from people in order to pay necessary salaries[130]. Thucydides records (2.13) that the reserves of Athens were about ninety-seven hundred talents, while Demosthenes claims (4.35) that the money spent for the cost of Panathinea and Dionysia, the most famous of the Athenian festivals, is more than the cost of any naval enterprise. Athens is very rich, but is it the only rich city in the Hellenic world?

It is also true that other cities, are wealthy, or even conspicuously wealthy. Thebes, unlike Athens, due to its rich soil, is self-sufficient[131], and the same is true of Argos, known for its fertile land and its abundant water supplies[132]. Corinth, as well, is an

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[129] Kurt A. Raaflub in 'The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth Century'(Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub, eds., *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (London: Harvard UP, 2001) pp.15-41), adds an important parameter to the changing of the economic status of the lower classes: the thalassocratic role of Athens, besides solving their economic problems by making them permanently involved in military affairs, contributed to the lower classes' improvement of their political standing and prestige since the military sovereignty of the empire depended on them (p.19).

[130] Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology and the Power of People* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 23.

[131]Thucydides, 1.2. The soil was extremely fertile, and the Thebans were known as farmers absolutely content with what they were doing (Nancy H. Demand, *Thebes in the Fifth Century: Heracles Resurgent* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p.10).

[132]Argos' soil – due to its water – was used extensively for agriculture, and therefore, Argos had wealthy farmers. Other than that, its gentlemen were occupied with politics and war, while pottery was in the hands of low class but wealthy families. Its aristocracy was military as the one in Sparta.(R. A. Tomlinson, *Argos and Argolid: From the End of the Bronze Age to the Roman Occupation* (Ithaca, N Y: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 27, 71-72, 222).

exceptionally wealthy[133] city due to its soil, its position, and its commerce. Besides the fact that the reputation of Corinthian soil is excellent[134], and therefore, the economy was based on farming in the early years, the economy is entirely in the hands of Corinthians who are the only owners of land and property, unlike the Athenians who let foreigners own some(Salmon, p. 162). The Corinthians, like the Athenians, establish colonies, and although their trade and economy are affected negatively by the expansion of the influence of the Athenian empire all over the Aegean[135], the position of the city between two gulfs is its great financial advantage: as Thucydides notes, Corinth has commercial benefits, since, by building a kind of land bridge, a *diolkos*, between the two gulfs, it helps merchants to decrease the time they need to traffic their products, and therefore, Corinth collects taxes from them.(3.15.1, 8.8.4)

Athens is not the only economically strong city. That Athens, however, has a particular set of ideas, a prominent cultural ideology that justifies for itself and others decisions, choices, and social arrangements is a fact beyond any doubt. And although economic advancement is always necessary for the autonomy of a city, what motivates people to work for the city is the ideology they share. The anthropologist Jack Goody, when arguing about the transformation of small communities into cities, speaks of the 'transition from worldview to ideology'[136], to a set of ideas and values endorsed and accepted by the people, because the motivation for produce or work

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[133] Corinth gives its name to a verb – *corinthiazin* – to imply a luxurious way of living beyond the ordinary. 'I act the Corinthian' meant mostly to spend time in the company of many women – an act travellers going back and forth in the Peloponnesus enjoyed tremendously, and therefore, they always used to spend time in Corinth, even though they did not have any other business in the city (J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) , p. 81).

[134] The reputation of the Corinthian soil was excellent: it was mostly dry, but it could easily collect rain water. In the early years, the economy was based on farming (ibid.).

[135] Because of population pressures, Corinth started to expand in the 7th century. It had founded a colony in Southern Italy, and Corcyra in the Ionian. In the 6th century, after the appearance of Athens, Corinth's expansion and trade to east and west showed signs of decline (Salmon, pp.90-91).

[136] Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 22.

depends on the ideas the state invents to motivate the people to produce or work, for themselves, but for the state as well. And what is said about another society can also be applied to Athens: 'technological advance created the possibility of a surplus, but to transform that possibility into a reality required an ideology that motivated farmers to produce more than they needed to stay alive and to be productive, and persuaded them to turn that surplus over to someone else.'[137]

Is Athens the only Greek city which has the ideology – centred mostly around the pride of the city itself, and the politics of the *demos* – to motivate people to work and create? Do other cities have less of a motivating ideology? In terms of democracy, only Argos has a democratic system (Thuc. 2.39) of government[138], however not a continuous one, but then Argos, being close to Sparta, is keen on surviving during its entire Dorian[139] existence, engaging in wars against it either to protect itself or to demonstrate its alliance with Athens[140]. Thebes, on the other hand, was more of a 'tribal monarchical state' as late as in the fifth century, and it has never demonstrated the amount of urbanization Athens is known for (Demand, p. 93)[141]. Lastly, Corinth is labelled as oligarchic, a relaxed, moderate oligarchy based on aristocratic rather than on democratic values bequeathed to the city by the long line of the family of Bacchiads[142] who, nevertheless, built a city[143] ready to entertain itself with festivals and athletic events[144].

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[137] Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), p. 157).

[138] Argos, with the end of Dorian control in 460, became a democracy. Among other characteristics of the system was the fact that it had a popular assembly like the one in Athens which issued decrees. Originally, the assembly's members could be only the ones who were members of the three Dorian tribes; later they were the ones who possessed land (Tomlinson, pp. 193-220).

[139] Argos was a Dorian settlement, and its kings functioned the same way they functioned in Sparta: their authority had to be accepted by the Dorians of the settlement (Tomlinson, pp.65,68).

[140] Argos stayed away from both Athens and Sparta during the Peloponnesian War, but at other times, Argos tried to be in an alliance with Athens, as in 417 (ibid, pp.116,120).

[141] The oligarchy of Thebes followed immediately after the monarchy (Tomlinson, pp. 15,93)

[142] The tyranny of the Bacchiads lasted until the 6th century. Afterwards, the city formed a council of 80 who followed a constitution as late as 338. Actually, no evidence exists to show how or if people were

Back to Athens, yes, it is primarily Greek, and certain perspectives referring to it hold that the democratic ideology strongly associated with Athens is simply the city ideology it shares with other Greek cities[145], while Ian Morris expresses his assumptions about Athenian art as such: 'Athenian behaviour was but one local variant on a truly Panhellenic pattern'[146].

It most certainly is 'on a truly Panhellenic pattern', but it is also within another pattern – that of those emphatically vigorous cities existing in history such as Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, or New York, the same history-making city, of its own time-making, the inspiration of outsiders who feel the way the following lines demonstrate: 'We understand then – we were meant to understand then – that England was to be our source of myth and the source from which we got our sense of reality, our sense of what was meaningful [...] and much about our own lives and much about the very idea of us headed that last list;'[147] a writer from another era writes about another place, but about the same inspiration a city might have to locals and outsiders alike.

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elected, and, according to Aristotle (*Pol.* 1293a 12-17, 1299b 32-4) it is possible that political rights were not given to all citizens . Also, another characteristic of the political system here was that after the fall of tyranny 'kinship tribes were replaced by territorial organization' for purely political reasons unlike Athens where the hereditary ties in political life were of major importance. Plutarch (*Nicias* 6.4) calls the political regime of Corinth oligarchy.

[143] The period of building activity in Corinth was the years of the Cypselus and Periander tyrannies between 657 and 585. Although the buildings were not large, they were quite magnificent. During the same period, the temple of Apollo in Corinth, and the one of Posidon in Isthmia were built (Salmon, p.180).

[144] Because of the predominant aristocratic values, athletic games were a common practice. One of them was taking place during a Panhellenic festival which was unique in the Greek mainland because it was initiated by a major city. There are also reports of choral and other festivals in Corinth or at Isthmia (ibid, pp. 256. 403).

[145] P. J. Rhodes, ("Nothing to Do With Democracy: Athenian Drama and the *Polis*", in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 123 (2003): 104-109) after a detailed analysis of the 'institutional framework' of the theatrical performance of Athens, concludes that 'that it is much more important that the institutional setting is a *polis* setting than that it is a democratic setting: that what we have here is the *polis* in action rather than especially democracy in action.' (p.113) .

[146] In 'Beyond Democracy and Empire: Athenian Art in Context' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* ed. by Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp.59-86, p.60.

[147]Jamaica Kincaid, 'On Seeing England for the First Time', in *Anthropology 00/01*, ed. by Elvio Angeloni (Sluice Dock, Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin/McGraw Hill, 2001),pp. 222-224 (p. 222).

Athens inspires, but mostly creates, as Meier expresses it, a 'political time', an awareness of its own present myth, and the human's ability to control time, and therefore history, through their political – democratic – procedures[148]. Athens is a city of the Hellenic world, but its degree of development and awareness exceed that of the other Greek cities, and creates a difference between itself and the other cities, *but*, always on the pattern of the Hellenic world .

Before the analysis of the Athenian ideology which comes next and which will demonstrate the Athenian evolution, and its centrality in the Hellenic world, to indicate briefly the scope of it when compared with other Greek cities, the following epigrammatically indicative differences between Athens and other Greek cities can be stated. First, although citizens in other cities are involved in their city's politics, in Athens, because of the hegemonic role of their city and the many decisions that have to be taken – such as taxation of allies, initiations of war, or the situation in colonies – the participation of citizens is more intense[149] here than in other cities (Raaflaub, pp.19-20). Second, although all cities hold many festivals, Athens holds more than any because of its high revenues; it affords to hold them, in other words. Consequently, more festivals mean more sacrifices, and eventually, more meat for all; and 'nothing is more democratic than this'(ibid., p.38). Thirdly, although all cities dedicate monuments to the victories of the Persian wars, Athens praises itself continuously, with monuments built years later, as a habit passed from generation to generation[150]. Fourth, the thalassocratic Athens, more than other prominent cities, such as Corinth or Sparta, is in a position of being able to subdue brutally and with

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[148] Christian Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics,* trans. by David McLintock (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 218.
[149] the same author adds that about 6,000 citizens attend the assembly for half a day or so.
[150] Tonio Hölscher, 'Images and Political Identity: The Case of Athens' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, pp.153-183, p.167.

shocking speed revolts against it – the Samians'[151] refusal to pay taxes was one of them – demonstrating thus its sovereignty[152]. And lastly, although all cities honour individuals by offering to them state burials[153], in Athens, the concentration of both, 'collective and individual graves in the state cemetery [...] was unique '[154].

The city, during the fifth century, besides being democratic, is arrogantly Athenian, and impulsively literate – more than the other cities seem to be. This combination, loaded with religious overtones is what constitutes the city's ideology, and eventually, leads to the city's distinctive cultural complex.

First, Athenians have created a myth about themselves as natives of the land and the city which gives to all a sense of unity as well as of pride and esteem. This feeling of connection with the city projects into an image of themselves as the elite among the remainder of the Greeks. Second, the politics of democracy – as is argued – is based on the concept of sharing, participating, and debating the state's decision making – even though the laws and the constitution are not what today would be called democratic, even though there are a number of disagreements among various political opinions or groups. And third, literacy – with all the tensions it marks in a society which is not entirely literate – nevertheless, paves the way for 'emancipated' intellectual creativities, or just creativities, and subjective expressions different from those of the common, Greek past, even different from Athenian politics. As such, this

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[151] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 28, 2-3.

[152] Another example is Milos which repeatedly suffered Athenian brutality, according to Thucydides (2.94, 3.91, 5.11); and in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (186), there is reference to the famine the people of Milos had to go through due to the Athenian siege of their island. In 415, the Athenians killed all the men ,and enslaved the women.

[153] According to Helene P. Foley (*Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Princeton University Press,2001)), 'whereas other Greek cities buried the bones of the dead on the battlefield, Athens took pride in its unique custom of bringing them home for public burial'(p.39).

[154] Besides the 'unique' concentration of graves in the state cemetery, the same author adds that 'Athenians adopted art in uniquely systematic and ambitious ways to define the specific character of public spaces'(p.182).

ideology [155] creates links *and* tensions between the dominant groups and the non-dominant ones since all seem to be given opportunities to express opinions even antithetical to the *status quo*. In the same way, the rulers justify their dominion by giving the chance to the people who are governed to 'make their account count'[156], first, by persistently debating the views and decisions made by those who govern, and also, by interpreting in writing the dominant ideology in their own way, therefore, 'making their account count' again in a different way.

This ideology described above is what might be called a form of successful hegemony as defined by Gramsci and Mosca[157] according to whom, democracy might be viewed as a realistic system, the 'legislation of which favors [sic] the transition from the groups led to the leading group'[158], what the Athenian democracy does continuously and variously – as will be described.

As such then, the ideology of Athens proposed here involves the people's ways of experiencing their lives, and their ways of interpreting variously with it. The links between this ideology and the people's interpretation of it, constitute the framework of Athenian culture the concepts of which – to return to the original argument – are associated with the concepts of Greek religion as discussed previously.

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[155] The Athenian democracy lasted, with only small intervals, for about 117 years.
[156] Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Interpretation in Social Analysis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), p. 83.
[157] Maurice A. Finocchiaro, 'Rethinking Gramsci's Political Philosophy', in *The Paideia Archive* (Papers given at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Aug. 10-15, 1998, in Boston MA.) http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Poli/PoliFino.htm [accessed June 1, 2004].
[158] Antonio Gramsci, in Finocchiaro (1998) [para. 14 of 21].

II. 1. From Religious to Social Rituals: Panathinea

The discussion of Athenian ideology and ultimately culture – which will lead in the next chapter to the discussion of the performing self – is centred around three types of rituals – social, civic, and the theatrical performance – as they form their character depending on the social practice of their expression, the symbolism involved, the element of communication, and their purpose.

In the early part of the chapter, the lengthy reference to religious rituals revealed, besides the common aspects of Greek religion, the set of practices and the strong element of display, the element of ambiguity as well coming out of the forms of communication. Basic as it is, nevertheless, this element leaves space for interpretation which makes the differentiation among the various rituals distinctive rather than confusing.

As already written, the religious rituals are characterised by the desire and the purpose of the social group to communicate with the sacred world of divine powers. Yet, in Athens, what starts as a religious ritual, the Panathinea – since it is devoted to the goddess Athena – takes the form of a social ritual since the dedication to Athena becomes a dedication to, and a worshipping of, the city/state itself: Athena and Athens are two names of the same ritual, and therefore, an Athenian social ritual is defined primarily as a set of practices which the city initiates to worship and communicate with the idea of the city itself.

Next, the public funeral, another social ritual, is not dedicated to a goddess, but worships and honours the sacrificed youth of the wars for the honour and glory of Athens, and therefore, this formal ritual underlines the communication of the city/state

with its dead citizens, the city's commitment to them, and the paradigmatic message the state wants to pass on to all its citizens about *their* commitment to their city.

Third, the civic rituals or their other name, the court dramas, display a particular set of practices in defined schemes recognised by all, and it is a formal communication between the state and its people; the purpose here is the following of legal procedures in order to arrive at decisions respected by all in the city/state and for the well being of the city; they are the legal worship of the city which involves written laws and procedures valued by all.

And lastly, the theatrical performance, the most complex of the city rituals since it starts as a religious ritual devoted to a god, contains a social ritual like Panathinea, and ends as a theatrical performance on stage. It displays, therefore, a multi-level communication between the city and the god, the city and the state, and between the city and the individual – since the highlight of the ritual involves first, plays which reflect private citizens' perspectives of human and social problems, and second, since the plays expose and display the behaviour and problems, even private ones, of individual characters on stage. All these rituals, although they begin as religious ones, and share common aspects, nevertheless, they, along with their city, create a history of their own, within the Hellenic world.

First, in Athens, as in all Greek cities around the fifth century BC, the ritualistic perception of religion takes the form of elaborate social organizations in the form of long processions, with participants – citizens or not – sharing, competing, celebrating their unity under the name of a god next to the name of a city, and it is not hyperbole to note, and therefore to argue, that the religion evolves into the religion of the city, for the sake of the city. In Athens, people participate in a religious ceremonial *ergon*

such as a sacrifice, compete as athletes, musicians, citizens, pray as priests[159], and sacrifice; even Socrates[160] does. To a goddess they worship? To a principle they value? A city principle, that is. The very act and ritual of sacrifice may easily change, however, into a practical act of spending money, and for whom? For 'every poor citizen' as the man complains in the following lines:

> The Athenian populace realises that it is impossible for each of the poor to offer sacrifices, to give lavish feasts, to set up shrines, and to manage a city which will be beautiful and great, and yet the populace has discovered how to have sacrifices, shrines, banquets, and temples. The city sacrifices at public expense many victims, but it is the people who enjoy the feasts and to whom the victims are allotted[161].

Every religious act can turn into a state act, and can imply rights taken for granted by some, and obligations taken for granted by the state. Athens acts piously by sacrificing, keeping holidays, or building temples, and the jurors, among others, have to swear by the names of Zeus, Posidon and Demeter[162]. As for the episode of the mutilation of the Hermes, the night before the Sicilian expedition[163], it is taken by

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[159] In Plato's *Statesman*, the priests know how to offer gifts to the gods in sacrifices in a manner pleasing to them; they know, too, the right forms of prayer for petitioning the gods to bestow blessings on worshippers. (290c).

[160] His last words were: 'I owe a cock to Asclepius, Crito. You pay it and do not neglect it' (Plato, *Phaedo,* 118). Socrates' words about a sacrifice to a god may show that even though he was accused of not believing in gods, he sacrifices to them probably because they represent for him a value of his city where he lived and taught.

[161] '*Pseudo-Xenophon*': *Constitution of the Athenians* trans. by G. W. Bowersock, in *Xenophon VII: Scripta Minora*, Loeb Classical Library 183 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925: repr. 1993), II.9-10 (p. 491).

[162] Philip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N J: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 22.

[163] The Sicilian expedition in 415 was part of the Athenians' plan to defeat the Spartans away from the mainland, on the island of Sicily. The expedition was one of the episodes of the Peloponnesian war (431-404) which ended with the defeat of Athens.

some as an act against democracy (Thuc. 6.28,6.60), and for the restoration of oligarchy[164].

Indeed, the city and its democracy have one name, Athena, a deity hardly just another deity: she is the city and the city's civic consistency. Multi-inspirational and multi-functional[165], she becomes more Athenian than Greek, or actually transforms from Greek to Athenian, and her subjects and initiators, accompany her and her majestic role, claiming in turn their own majestic role among the Greeks. As such, the transformation of Greek religious elements into Athenian-identified elements in connection to Athena concerns for the Athenians the origins of the city[166], the functions of the city in the Greek world, and the performing of city rituals in honour of Athena.

First, as far as the history of the city is concerned, it is significant to mention that the Athenians' early connection with their deity may have some true claims to it: in *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*[167], François de Polignac

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[164] Any new ideology adopted by any *demos* (or *deme)* instead of the established one in a moment of crisis is seen as an act of treason against the city itself, and its democracy (Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis Religion?', p. 305).

[165] In one of her visual images, on a fifth-century mug (Museum of Louvre, Paris), Athena is a helmeted bright-eyed owl, carrying a shield and a spear in her role as *promachos*, the city fighter, first among the best. Her worship is religion turned into ideology, for the sake of the city, its power, its dominance, and its democracy (J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase Painters*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 983.3).

[166] The goddess is in a constant, monolithically powerful relationship with her city, she is the city's history and land: the west pediment of Parthenon depicts hers and Posidon's battling for Attica, while its frieze portrays a Panathinaic festival procession in a demonstration of the Athenians' spatial dependence, inseparable from their very existence and survival (Athena Kavoulaki, 'Processional Performances and the Democratic Polis', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 293-320 (p. 297)). The goddess of the olive tree and the owl – whenever together, they symbolize both Athens and Athena – is worshipped for the gift of the land, while the identity of the goddess with the city is taken for granted by them (Herbert Hoffman, '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria morti*: the imagery of heroic immortality on Athenian painted vases', in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*., ed. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 37).

[167] as translated by Janet Lloyd (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). It should be noted that this volume was originally published as *La Naissance de la Cité Grecque* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1984).

introduces an approach which is quite distinct[168] from the theories of Weber and Durkheim about the beginning and rise of the city[169]. Basing his assumptions on archaeological findings related to shrines, he concludes that Athens is the only archaic one in the area of Hellas the sacred rites of which focus on one deity, Athena, in the centre of an original community rather than two, in the centre and in the periphery (de Polygnac, p.84). And although there are various shrines in Attica, to Artemis or Demeter for example, Panathinea, the most characteristic worshipping process of Athens for Athena starts from the periphery of the town and ends in the centre, the temple of Athena on the Acropolis (ibid., p. 124). As such, Athena is for the Athenians, the *poliouchos* (protector of the city), the *archon* (ruler),[170] the reference deity of the people's land.

The above assertions about the Athenians' originality bear analogies with the myth the Athenians have created about themselves, and their past – not an obscure time similar to that of the other Greeks, but a myth as a look at a named, unparalleled past. It is actually what Thucydides, among others, calls *autochthonia* – with the Athenians as *autochthones* – when he reports the following:

> Attica, from the poverty of its soil, enjoyed from a very remote period freedom from faction, and never changed its inhabitants. This strikingly confirms my view that it was the migrations which prevented the other states growing as fast as Athens. The most powerful victims of war[…] took refuge with the Athenians as a safe

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[168] de Polignac's original study of the formation of the city referred to a slow and progressive establishment of connected structures, the main purpose of which was the adoption of common rituals among them and the proper way of taking part in them.

[169] Oswyn Murray in 'The Cities of Reason', in *The Greek City*, ed. by Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 1-25, identifies (a) Weber's approach – the political dimensions of the origins of the city, and (b) Durkheim's tradition that holds that there is no dividing line between public and private levels of activity.

[170] Most probably, Athena represented the embodiment of the Mycenaean protector goddess of the palace around 2000 B.C. (according to de Polignac).

> retreat, and at an early period became naturalized [...] . Attica became at last too small to hold them, and they had to send out colonies to Ionia (I, 2.6).

Thucydides' theory, though, according to Connor[171] is not very solid: after a number of premises, he comes to the conclusion that Thucydides 'knew no more than the rest of us' about immigration in Attica, and that the 'infusion of non-Attic blood was not uncommon in both the Archaic and the Classical world'(ibid.). Yet, Athenians, such as Xenophon[172], or famous foreigners living in Athens – the *metoicoi* – such as Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, 1,5,1360b31ff), or Herodotus (1.56-58), report on the uniqueness of the city and the citizens – in terms of origins, of land and history, and they, therefore, practice what one view states about history: that one of its uses 'has been the creation of traditional mythologies attributing a historical sanctity to the present self-images of [...] classes and societies'[173]. And as is the case, Athenians create their own history based on these beliefs – whether factual or not, for their image as Athenians.

Athena, thus, becomes synonymous with *autochthonia*, with democracy, and leadership among the Greeks. A characteristic example of the association of Athena with the Athenian leadership, and their imperial *ex cathedra* assumption, is the frieze of the Parthenon when compared with the one of the temple of Zeus at Olympia[174]. The one on the Acropolis shows the holy procession, while the pediments portray various combats – between Greeks and Amazons, scenes from the Trojan war, gods against giants, centaurs and lapiths. The celebration of the goddess, then, is put into a

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[171] W. Robert Connor, 'The Problem of Athenian Civic Identity', *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, ed. by A. Boegehold and A. Scafuro (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 34-44).
[172] Xenophon, *Ways and Means* I.1-8
[173] G. Stedman Jones, 'History: the Poverty of Empiricism', in R. Blackburn (ed.), *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory* (London: Fontana, 1972), pp. 96-115 (p. 112).
[174] The Parthenon was started a decade after the Olympia.

context of all-pervasive violence: 'not only do we have the cosmic battle of gods and giants, but the decision to run conflict between Greeks and Amazons [...]. These are not scenes of domestic violence, they are scenes of all-out war.'[175] In contrast, the sculptures at Olympia present 'family feuds, marriage disruptions [...] scenes of domestic and not war-like violence'(ibid.), even though Olympia is considered pan-hellenic. But pan-hellenic for Olympia does not mean pan-olympian; for Athens, the Panathinean and the Panhellenic spectrum coincide under the name of *the* deity, *the* ideal, civic, solid figure. *Autochthony,* as opposed to the idea of Otherness, seems to become an emblem of the Athenians under the shield of Athena, as a kind of distinctive pride symbolised by their will to establish for them and others a splendid[176] image of the city.

Yet, the ultimately distinctive moment of Athenian pride in the form of the city's collective spirit comes during the Great Panathinea, the celebration in the name of Athena who authorises women with roles mainly for the procession, and its tracing of

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[175] Robin Osborne, 'Framing the Centaur: Reading Fifth-Century Architectural Sculpture' in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture* ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 52-84 (p. 64).

[176] As ancient texts report, and temple ruins demonstrate, the Athenians construct strikingly beautiful, almost extravagant buildings for common use, but, on the other hand, show a totally undistinguished taste as far as their own private houses are concerned. Similarly, they demonstrate the same indifference in taste in the way each one of them dresses, according to the following source: 'if it were customary for a slave to be struck by one who is free, you would often hit an Athenian citizen by mistake on the assumption that he was a slave. For the people there are no better dressed than the slaves and *metoicoi*, (the foreigners living in Athens), nor are they any more handsome' ('Pseudo Xenophon', I. 10). And the distinction motive again – or should it be called 'weapon' instead? – is recorded not only on the splendour of the buildings and the frieze of the Parthenon, but in an abundance of texts which present the Athenians to be more clever than the others (Aeschines 1.178, Demosth. 3.15), certainly not like the slow and lazy Thebans – as Aristophanes ridicules them in the *Acharnians*. Besides, the most mnemonic definition of the Athenian unity and pride is portrayed in the splendour surrounding the Marathon battle, where the Athenians face the Persians alone, according to them, and all the other Greeks are the *alloi Hellenes* (Lysias 22, 23,); the *alloi,* the others, are the ones the Athenians perceive themselves through in order for the grandeur of the Athenians to be known to all. The Plataians, who most probably have participated in the battle, are omitted from the epigrams and all the tributes, e.g. in the epigram of the Stoa in the Agora, Simonides writes: '*Hellenon promachountes Athenaioi Marathoni*' (West, W. C., 'Saviours of Greece', in *GRBS*,11,1970, pp.275-277).

the historical, religious, and commercial centre of the city[177]. Panathinea is unquestionably a motive/cause for the city's collective display, a spectacle of visual, acoustic, and choreographic overtones, a show for all in complete harmony with the hegemonic spirit of the city.

As Kavoulaki underlines in her analysis of the ceremonious appeal of the festival (p.300), they all are engaged in a social, physical and psychological interaction – since the presence of the onlooker-witnesses of the religious show affect the performers, because 'taking responsibility in front of an audience implies a degree of consciousness [...] which works from both sides'[178]. The spectators are watching, dancing and eating the meat of the sacrifice to Athena, while the participants are acting out their roles 'in connection to the special context which sets the performance apart from the everyday activities' (Kavoulaki, p. 294). As for the organization of the procession[179] itself, it is the work of state officials whose main concern is the representation of all, *metice* and citizens alike in groups according to demes. In a prominent position are the state officials along with the priestess[180], while representatives from allied cities always have their own positions in the procession (Kavoulaki, p.301). And as it is an Athenian procession, it is characterised by its excellence: all are most extravagant, most holy[181]:

> the *kanephoroi* – who could be numerous – were elaborately dressed, the *pompeia* (professional apparatus) were choice items often of precious materials, and the participating old men were

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[177] Texts (Dem. 34, 39, Paus. 1, 2.14) refer extensively to it, and archaeological excavations have confirmed the literary sources.
[178] Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 15, 38-42.
[179] Actually, a procession is not a parade; it is going somewhere to do something.
[180] The priestess came from the *genos* of Eteoboutadai . As for the slaves, according to Kavoulaki, they were carrying an oak branch through the agora. Among the many who were taking part of the procession, there were also the daughters of *metice*(p.301).
[181] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 307, Plut. *Alcibiades*. 148e.

> selected among the most handsome. The long row of cavalry men and young hoplites [...and] the musicians increased the overall aesthetic value of the procession with their melodies [...] the *kanephoroi* are daughters of noble Athenians and precede the daughters of metoikoi who follow as *skiadephoroi* (parasol -bearers); [...]. At the same time, the power of the public body, emphasized by the presence of troops among the participants, interacts with the power of the Athenian *arche*(hegemony) manifested [...] through the participation of embassies from the colonies (Kavoulaki, p. 300-1).

Athens honours her Athena, or Athena honours her Athens, in a ritual procession of utmost importance for the solidarity of the city people in the name of a deity who protects their solidarity and interaction, and they, in turn protect and secure her divine existence. Is not reciprocity, after all, a characteristic of their Greek religion? Is not sharing, along with acting and an intense competitive attitude, another characteristic of their religion?

In the case of Athena and Panathinea, the ritualistic celebration of religion is equivalent to the ritualistic celebration of the state since the participants are state officials, hoplites, daughters of noble Athenians chosen to display the power of Athenian hegemony rather than the power of the goddess of wisdom. The myth in display is the myth of the unity of the state, and the objects held symbolise the unity of the state as well as the leadership of Athens among its allies.

Or, what actually is described with the ritualistic celebration of Panathinea is older practices of religion – ambiguous communication through symbols, or processions for the sake of sharing, or simply acting as displaying – used to worship new values

of the hegemonic city. And as does happen in history, the moment people – the Athenians – seem to be 'engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed' – such as the creation of their city – they 'conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, and borrow from them names [...] and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history'[182]. In another way of articulating the same thing, of people's using old spirits to form new worlds, Schechner does not examine the issue under discussion historically, but rather culturally: he avoids the heroic cries of the past, but employs terms such as 'restored behaviour' to include the performing of social practices[183]. His assumptions focus on rearrangements and reconstructions, of doing things which happened previously and exist as a kind of replica of an old ritual or social practice the actors, as he writes, kept stored in their memories, in their oral communications, in their writings, and then transmit and manipulate (ibid, p. 36) what they have stored; 'restored behaviour', thus, involves actors' revisions, and seemingly new ways read as choices which are only the old ways covered under a brand new costume.

In Athens, what seems to be restored, and manipulated are not the forms of the ritualistic perception of Greek religion, such as myths, but the old concepts associated with the ritualistic celebration of religion which are rearranged as 'strips of behaviour' under the influence of the hegemonic principles and the status of politics. As is argued, the primary concepts associated with religion, such as the concept of Greekness and Otherness, of doing, of sharing and of competing, in the context of the Athenian city locus are rearranged variously, and Panathinea, to mention one

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[182] Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962 (originally published 1852)), p.247.

[183] Schechner, Richard, 'Magnitudes of Performance', in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, ed. by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 19-49 (p. 35).

example, is only one expression of such a manipulation: the concept of Greekness transforms into Athenianism, the concept of competition is manipulated into the doctrine of Athenian superiority – of being and behaving as a winner – the acting out of a ceremonious *ergon* is now in the form of a procession for the sake of sharing with all in the city and beyond it .

The above points of argument do not imply a contradictory point to that expressed before: Athens, all Greek cities, practice religion quite obsessively, since 'no such unity as we find in Greece between state and religion has ever existed before'[184] Nilsson firmly assures, and the archaeological findings of temples in all Greek cities reaffirm. Yet, as it is the case, and as Kavoulaki[185] points out, Athens develops more than any other cities religious rituals *and* processions in the name of democracy, as well as processions only in the name of democracy (p.296). Additionally, what the argument does mean is that although Athens associates itself with new ideologies, or what seems a new, political ideology, it reverts to old concepts in order to practice these new ideologies. The 'strips' of old concepts are assimilated variously in the Athenian way of practicing/performing democracy as a state business, and, as a way to connect people with their city' politics.

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[184] Martin P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), p.242).
[185] She bases her assumption on Plutarch's *Lycurgus* (30, as cited in her article).

II. 2. Social Rituals and Civic Dramas

a. Public Funerals

The discussion on the other two types of rituals concentrates extensively on two areas related to Athenian society and ideology: public funerals, and court cases. Public funerals demonstrate the concept of display – public *ergon* – at the state level: it is a visual *ergon*, because it includes a ceremony with various participants who represent a social body of the city, and a verbal one, because it contains a speech which is a manifestation of the Athenian state philosophy. It is also an act of communication in all its ambiguity. The discussion on courts is a demonstration of the concept of competition in its supremely verbal form. The Athenian spoken agonistic spirit is engraved in political meetings, legal debates, agora dialogues in the entire civic centre, but the courts invite particular attention due to the forensic ability of the lawyers, the number of cases, and the publicity/popularity, of the court cases. Competition takes the form of a ceremony with rules to follow but also to break, and the purpose is to win the case, the opposing lawyer, the applause of the audience, and to simply fight as a boxer in the ring, as Socrates remarks.

First, the discussion on public funerals includes the characterization of them as social rituals, and then, the analysis that follows focuses on the concepts related to them, that of unity, sharing, and communicating.

Public funerals can be characterised as social practices like rituals, and they include a procession like Panathinea (Kavoulaki, p.294). Unlike Panathinea, they do not honour a deity, but dead soldiers; unlike Panathinea, they do not include a myth related to a deity. They, actually, involve formal roles: those who participate and

observe, or perform the social ritual witness a ceremony of 'invariant sequences'[186] which 'conceals a system of social relations'[187], and, as such, it appears in other forms, and for other purposes in the city life, for example, in judicial processes. As Turner writes: they, the judicial processes, 'may themselves be termed `dramatic` for they have their roles [...] their audience. Both [...] are ways in which a society's members become conscious of values and laws that bind them together [...] (p. 275).

The public funeral in its repetitive form of ceremonies and levels of interaction 'associated with collective ends and means'(Turner, p. 269) puts together 'many apparently separated things', and it magnifies the identity of the ritual performers 'through their roles in traditional groups and sub-groups'(p. 275).

They, the ritual performers – the state officials, the widows, the orphans of the war, and the spectators – participate in a ritual the state initiates to demonstrate its gratitude towards the dead warriors, but is it not also true that state funerals – whether in the past or now – are political events[188] which initiate emotional reactions such as grief, frustration, even anger towards the city? And is it not also true that a city needs to control these feelings related to death *and* death itself in order to function as a city? In the archaic era, as is well known from vase paintings and from Homer, funerals were events taken care by the family, emphasising the social status and gender of the individual, but, during the sixth century, Solon[189], according to Plutarch (*Solon*,21.4),

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[186] Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 51.

[187] V. W. Turner, *The Dreams of Affliction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 3.

[188] In her analysis of ritual lamentation, Helene P. Foley compares Western with non-Western perception of death rituals, and she observes that Mediterranean people, of the past or the present (such as Palestinians), would 'respond more appropriately' than Westerners to the long and emotional reactions in connection with funeral lamentation or tragic lamentations, and more particularly with state funerals; and she adds that state funerals are very important political events for the people of this region: they are 'opportunities to foment revolution, resistance, or revenge under the cover of one of the few mass events that those in authority do not feel comfortable in suppressing altogether, even if they do their best to control them' (*Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, p.21).

[189] Athens was not the only city to initiate laws on state funerals. But as Foley notices (p. 23, f7), the reasons for the legislation may have differed from city to city. As for Athens, it changes laws many

regulates the state funerals, and he instructs that all grave monuments should not be elaborate; as such, they should be completed in no more than three days by the work of ten men. He also forbids any praising of the dead, except in public funerals by those appointed by the state. Other arrangements concerning public funerals can easily be considered under the rubric of symbols – 'the multi faceted mnemonics' (Turner, p.1) of every society – rather than as laws: the warriors fallen in the same year are buried under a *demosion sema* consisting of a mound and an oar with information about the *phylae* (tribe) of the dead without their individual patronymic or demotic[190]. In addition, the symbols connected with the procession, related again with the land, establish the feeling of unity as well: in the agora, in the *stoa poecile*, a prominent position is taken by the war dead *stelae*, and other military memorials (Loraux, p. 31). As for the procession itself, after passing by the agora, it ends up at the cemetery of *Ceramicos;* and finally, during the whole procession, the women's laments[191] are permitted to accompany it, while the sound of *aulos* [192] provides the necessary ritualistic tone to the grievous ceremony.

In that way, Solon, attempts to turn death into a city[193] element, and as Taxidou so eloquently writes, 'he redefines death' since 'in controlling the power of the aristocratic families through a regulation of death ritual, the democratic *polis* also created new modes of citizenship'[194] The individuals interact, and communicate, as they did in Panathinea, but now the 'communication'(Rappaport, p. 51) is between the sacrifice of the warriors and the life of citizens, or it may be between the state

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times, and 'the motives for restraining funerary rites in the sixth century may well have differed under the Attic democracy'.

[190] Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* ((London: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 23.

[191] The lament was left to women, while the speeches to men (Loraux, p. 45-50).

[192] Wilson, Peter, 'The Aulos in Athens', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 80.

[193] Olga Taxidou in *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 8, points to the fact that during recent years anthropologists and classicists mainly emphasise 'the importance of mourning for the creation of the laws of democracy.

[194] Taxidou, , p. 176.

memory and the individual pain; or is it between human sacrifice and what is known as 'glorious death'? Probably, it is a communication between the heroes of the past, and the heroes-to-be, a communication for the sake of maintaining traditional notions about heroes participating in an 'eternal symposium'[195] with the living, not only mythical or epic figures, but citizens killed in the name of the *patris*[196]. Their glorious death has all the characteristics of a sacrifice, a generating element of commemoration, adding with their act a magnificent parameter in the patriotic[197] religion of the city.

The concept of communication, in all its ambiguity, similar to the one examined in the ritual of sacrifice, besides enforcing an element of unity in the name of Athenianism, contains another concept/parameter, or actually, a paradox perhaps – like the paradox encountered in the Greek religion with the concepts of inclusion and exclusion at the same time – because of this strongly-developed feeling of unity: an openness and willingness to accept and create new forms of communication, yet within the framework of the established institution.

Next, the element of unity is established with the procession which always marks and defines 'the bounding line', the space of the group, and, in turn, defines[198] the group. The space for the Athenians is their city – they always associate it with their origin, and identity: their society, actually themselves, to paraphrase Northrop Frye, always 'enriches itself by what it includes'[199]. Consequently, while the city permits

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[195] Plato, *Republic*, 2.343c-d. The role of the symposium in Greek religion is very important, and it is part of many beliefs mostly connected with mythical heroes. In the *Deipnosophists*, 4616, Athenaeus refers to a cup 'for the use of heroes only'.

[196] homeland

[197] According to Hoffman: 'religion as a social phenomenon was operative in Athens at two levels [...] at the patriotic level, death was transformed through the symbolic elaboration of a civic ideal known as "glorious death".' (ibid., p. 37).

[198] Kavoulaki writes: the definition of a group, smaller or larger, is to a large extent dependent on the space at its disposal which enables its very existence' (p.297).

[199] Northrop Frye, 'The Critical Path', in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. by Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University Press, 1986; repr. 1989), pp. 252-264 (p. 252).

the close fit between the citizen and the tribe, a man's autonomy is quite restricted: he is mainly a member of the city, his sort of anonymity is above his autonomy, and any distinctions relating to economic and social privileges[200], when it concerns (Loraux, p. 23) the sacrifice of the heroes in the war, are left behind. The monuments of the sacrifice are symbols of unity – both military and civic, and of power – military and civic.

With the feeling of unity well-established and secure, the Athenian state displays its other strong weapon – the orator's speech, a demonstration of democratic receptivity and dominance at the same time.

Yet, first, it must be said, that funeral speeches have welcomed much debate, since, of those existing, most scholars believe that they are not written to be spoken in public, while others think that they might be considered for public use since the ideology springing out of them is the same as the one recorded in other speeches – not epideictic ones as the funerals are – which are considered genuine (Ober, p. 47). The discussion here, without focusing on the idea as to whether they were read in public or not, and relying on the fact that the ones surviving have many similarities among them, concentrates on their content treated as a sample of the ideology under consideration.

That funeral orations employ heroic, aristocratic language to appeal to a democratically oriented city body is a fact beyond any possible doubt. In the speech Thucydides attributes to Pericles[201], he records the democratic leader calling for Homeric virtues such as *arete*, courage in battle, love of beauty and wisdom (Thuc.

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[200] The rule of the city has its exception. For example, among those killed in the Corinthian War (394 B.C.) was Doxileos whose name is preserved on the *demosion sema* at Keramikos cemetery, but whose noble family has built a precinct for him as well. (Ian Morris, 'Everyman's Grave', *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* ed. by Alan L. Boegenhold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994), pp. 67-101 (p. 82).

[201] The occasion is one public funeral of the many dead in the Peloponnesian war; in one battle, Pericles' son was killed as well.

2.35.1-2.46.1), or *time, philotimia*(3.40.2), and obedience to 'the laws' (2.37.3). In another funeral speech, Lysias[202] uses words such as 'honour' to express gratitude to the dead warriors:

> For I say their memory can never grow old while their honour is every man's envy [...] of their valour they are lauded as immortal. Thus you see them given a public funeral[...] because we think that those who have fallen in war are heroes worthy of receiving the same honours as the immortals (*Funeral Oration* 80-81).

Both speeches echo words used by Plato in his apophthegms about the organization of the city[203], Plato's city, who is an admirer of Thebes' oligarchic regime:

> [...] who would be not only *agathos* in war, but also capable of administering his city; the type of man who[...] honours courage as the fourth *arete*, not first, whether it is manifested in individuals or in the city as a whole (*Laws*, 666E).

And, finally, Socrates, in the same tones, promises, too: 'We shall bury them with whatever particular ceremony Delphi prescribes for men of such heroic mould' (Plato, *Republic* 469a-b).

Words such as '*arete'*, 'honour', and '*agathos*' which are related to aristocratic values and the elite, according to Loreaux and her influential work on Athenian society, show that 'aristocratic values were without rival 'in Athens, and that democracy was undermined from the inside by aristocratic values and representations'(52-56). Loreaux's analysis is extremely perceptive, but as shown, the Athenian state uses old forms of behaviour, and old concepts as part of its politics,

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[202] According to Loraux (*The Invention of Athens*), every epitaph has a distinctive tone depending on the era it was given: e.g., Lysias' 'symbouleutic narrative' (p. 91), Pericles' 'praise for democracy', or Isocrates' presentation of Athens as 'the seat of a perpetual panhellenic ceremony' (p. 95).

[203] A. W. H. Adkins, *From the Many to the One* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), p.150.

the ones Marx calls cries of the past, and Schechner names 'restored behaviour'. In political terms, one way to refer to what Athenian orators practice is to say that in 'the lack of an intrinsic connection to a set of ideas, words [...] may be borrowed. Indeed, like weapons in a revolutionary war, some of the most effective words are captured from the dominant class.'[204].

The above statement is a fine way of assuming that democracy borrows old tools to demonstrate fresh practices, and to say that the aristocratic words are a weapon in the receptive, interacting political philosophy of democracy – all under the shield of Athenian elitism: not only does the 'bounding line' demonstrate unity and sharing, not only does the common cause of the sacrifice of war-dead demonstrate unity, but words/'strips' of them demonstrate, for the Athenians and the others, the equal treatment and importance of all parties involved, the openness to all parties involved, while performing the social ritual of public funeral.

b. Athenian Courts

Another social ritual, or actually civic is acted out in courts, by the orators, the jurors and the audience, a replica of the concept of contest signifying originally the concept of unity among Greeks, a kind of game of competition and reciprocity. It is a civic drama, rather than ritual, because it follows certain legal procedures, it arrives at decisions respected by all, and because it confirms the well being of the city. It is an *ergon* on a basis as regular as the one relating to the processions, an activity with ceremonial contests of behaviour, a 'set of techniques', synonymous with

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[204] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism: Property, Community, and the Contradictions of Modern Social Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 153.

> a view of the speaker as the seat of origin rather than a point of articulation, a view of strategy as identifiable under an intentional description, a view of discourse as constitutive of character and community, a view of audience [...] as 'spectator' and 'participant', and finally, a view of 'ends' that binds speaker, strategy, and discourse in a web of purposive actions.[205]

The area of rhetoric whether in Athenian courts, assemblies or in front of heroes' monuments is a form of articulated communication, with all the characteristics of *agon* in a highly competitive society. In *Law and Society in Classical Athens,* Richard Garner, analysing the social values of competition in the city locus, claims that the wealthy men, the *caloe cagathoe*[206] as they are often called, are the contributors to the city's well-being through their various means of *choregie.* Consequently the city pays them back by offering them distinguished administrative positions, an anticipated outcome which offers an exegesis for the Athenians' craving for personal gain, the motive for various actions, while their insistence on 'material success was so great that the end result often far outweighed the means in the evaluation of action'[207].

In Athens, though, success means public recognition which can return to the individual in the form of social pressure 'brought to bear on citizens not only through general honour or shame but also through the laws' (ibid, p.18). Athenians compete for public recognition, public image, and appearance. And they make the laws[208]

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[205] Dilip Gaohkar, 'The Idea of Rhetoric in the Rhetoric of Science' in *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 58 (1993): 258-95.

[206] the fine and good, the noblemen.

[207] Richard Garner, *Law and Society in Classical Athens* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), p. 18.

[208] In *The Odyssey*, the Cyclopes 'have no meetings for counsel or traditional values [...] each one rules over his wife and children, and they do not care about each other (9.112-15). Aristotle in

omni-present, the 'cooperative legal system'(Garner, p. 19), and the courts, the forums of this presence, legal and civic. Obedience to the laws is reported in many sources (Herod. 7.104; Thuc. 2.37.3), and Cleon, among others, goes so far as to infer that even if the laws are not the best, obeying them is important (Thuc. 2.37.3).

The Athenians appear to have a need to initiate law suits, to listen to orators, to feel the power of the crowd, and to be, just be, in a long series of contests – athletic, theatrical – on a routine basis. They are Turner's 'living' ones, and it is as if they 'perform their lives[…] in a constant dialogue with the street drama in an everlasting spiral pattern' (Garner, p. 17). Virtually the same man can be among the audience one day, a witness on another, and a juror on the next: as Michael Leff argues, they are there for 'doing and making'[209] rather than dealing with the hermeneutics of their role (p.87). And perhaps some of them, like the Aristophanean character in *Clouds,* refuse to accept the idea that a spot on the map can be Athens, since the map fails to show any courts being in session (207-8). As it is, courts are most of the time in session, and in the following excerpt, Plato enhances Leff's idea about the popularity of courts in Athens when he describes the skill at the *pancration* and in court as if they are a struggle between two speaker-athletes:

> These two[Euthymus and Dionysodorus] are […] ready for battle. They're not like the two Acarnian brothers who are pancratists, for these two are able to fight with their bodies. These two are first of all formidable physically; they are quite skilled at fighting in arms and can teach anyone who pays. Second, when it comes to the battle in the courts, they

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Pol.(1252b22) cites the same passage contrasting thus the Greeks with the barbarians: the Greeks have laws and customs, but the barbarians are enslaved to a tyrant.

[209] Michael C. Leff, 'Agency, Performance, and Interpretation in Thucydides' Account of the Mytilene Debate' in *Theory, Text, Context* ed. by Christopher Lyle Johnstone (New York: University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 87-96 (p. 87).

are most strong both at contending and at teaching others to speak and to compose court speeches [...]. The only remaining type of combat they had not touched they have now worked out completely so that no one can oppose them. So skilled are they at fighting in speech and refuting any assertion that it makes no difference whether it is false or true (*Euthydemus* 271c – 272b).

And in another dialogue, *Charmides*, he praises speed and agility as most appropriate qualities, naming also a number of bodily exercises, boxing, running, leaping, that an Athenian should be ready to compete in (1.59d).

The Athenian society is agonistic, physically and verbally, to such an extent that sometimes, the verbal means are lethal rather than agonistic. David Cohen lists a number of words, such as 'rivalry, enmity, '[210], and violence, to underline the frequent use of them, and to refer to the relations of people on a regular basis since wars and games are taken for granted; *agones*, Vernant adds, are natural[211] even compulsory during classical times. But also words[212] and speeches[213] are used by orators[214], and

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[210] David Cohen, *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 8.

[211] Jean-Pierre Vernant writes in *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (London: Methuen, 1980; originally published as *Myth et Société en Grece Ancienne* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1974), p. 31.

[212] The word *logos* means speech, or it 'may be used to indicate the meaning behind an expression, or the power of thought, and organization or the rational principle of the universe. On the human level it involves man's thought and his function in society, and it further includes artistic creativity and the power of personality.' (George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 8).

[213] Besides the theatre, the public forums of the Athenians are the Assembly (*ecclesia*), the council (*boule*), and the courts (*Areopagus* and *dikasteria*). The assembly meets at Pnyx (Arist., *Ath. Pol* 42.4) about forty times per year (*Ath. Pol.* 42.4). Six thousand people participate, sharing no privileged seating. They start early in the morning with a prayer to the gods, and the discussed issue is the one according to the agenda of the *boule*. After the debate, a vote takes place and the issue eventually may become a law. The council meets in a building in the agora every day except holidays and 'unspecified numbers of days of ill omens'. About five hundred people – mostly of the elite – deal with the agenda of the assembly (*Ath. Pol.* 1299 b30 – 38). The *Areopagus* council tries certain classes of homicide and investigates other activities. It and the courts meet in buildings in the agora, and any citizen over the age of 30 can declare his willingness to be a member of the jury. From a list of six thousand, two hundred people become the jury. The courts meet two hundred days per year; they deal with private

not by just them, as weapons to gain support, to insult, to be as caustic as possible to an opponent.

As for the orators[215] in particular, according to the masses' expectations in the courts' social dramas, they are actors of a setting of strategies, in a setting of an audience that is magnetized by their techniques, and yet, suspicious of the very idea of the trickery of their techniques[216].

One of the most common techniques of an orator is to warn the audience of his opponent's rhetorical tricks, as if only the opponent should be suspected of tricks:

> Just as in gymnastic contests you see boxers contending with one another for position, so, for the sake of the polis, you [jurors] must be battle with him [...] and watch out for his evasive tactics (Aeschines 3.206).

Or 'these unholy arts[217] of speech which this man offers to teach our youth' (Aesch. 2.56). The art is not just deceptive[218] but unholy as well: the city is above the art of

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and public actions. (Christopher Lyle Johnstone 'Greek Oratorical Settings and the Problem of the Pnyx: Rethinking the Athenian Political Process' in *Theory, Text, Context*, C. L. Johnstone ed. (New York: State University of New York, 1996), p. 7 – 127)).

[214] The orators (*oratory* usually indicates the actual speech, while *rhetoric* the technique of speaking (Kennedy, p. 9)) who follow a set of rules to defend a case or to persuade the audience are usually engaged in the following kind of speeches: besides the epideictic which include the epitaphs and various others given during festivals – all in non-closed areas – they are the deliberative and the forensic. The similarity between the deliberative and the forensic speeches is that, in both cases, the individual is judged by a mass audience. Their main difference is that the courtroom gives the speaker greater opportunity to discuss himself and his opponent. (Johnstone, p.100-127).

[215]Besides the ordinary orators and their agonistic spirit, there are also the sycophants, the abusers of the defenders' rights, whose rhetorical skills are not used to defend a case, or their client, but to literally destroy the opponent, their co-citizens. They are trained speakers who are paid to do their job, and their reputation is similar to that of the bribed politicians: they make their living by 'extorting money from individuals who prefer to pay rather than to be dragged into an uncertain trial'. with a crowd attending them and their cases. Usually, these individuals are wealthy, rich citizens, and the sycophants take advantage of the people's envy against the willingness of the rich to pay rather than to face jurors and trial (Ober, p. 151, 174, 183).

[216]The debate about the authorship of some speeches, but not about the date of them, or as to whether or not these speeches were actually delivered or not, does not concern this research since its perception is cultural rather than historical. There is no doubt (Ober, p.49) about the fact that the speeches express the ideology of the city, therefore, they demonstrate the techniques used, and the competitive, agonistic atmosphere of the courts.

[217] ασεβεις πραξεις

[218] The 'deception of the people' law existed by that time (Aristotle, *Atheneon Politia* 43.5).

the orator-individual who must respect the *demos* and reassure the audience of his attitude quite often: 'you know perfectly well'(Aesch. 19.247), 'I am sure you know'(Demosth. 40.23-25), and he appeals to their memories (Demosth. 20.52) or to their ancestors (Aesch. 2.1.50). The orator knows and the audience anticipates the didactic role he extends towards the jury who will be instructed by him of the facts of the matter.

Whatever the case, these two gladiators, Demosthenes and Aeschines, fascinate themselves and others by performing their competitive skills in one of the city's spectacles where the concepts of religious rituals[219] and ceremonies metamorphose into the concepts of public, political and legal[220] procedures. They play their social roles, participate in civic dramas, take oaths, follow a line of argument, vote, and they are aware of the power of the majority.

From religious to social rituals, to civic dramas – under the auspices of Athena/ Athens – it is argued that religious concepts are transformed into Athenian ones which involve the way people experience rituals and social dramas: the old concept of unity under Greekness converts into unity under Athenianism; performing religious rituals turns into displaying the ritual of Athenian hegemony; acknowledging religion modifies into acknowledging democracy; sharing in rituals takes the shape of sharing

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[219] Rituals concerned with the passage from one status of life to another, e.g., from single to married life, from youth to citizenship, are called 'rites of passage'. In this last one, the youth passes from the household influence of women and is accepted into the community of male citizens. In chapter 42 of *Atheneon Politia*, Aristotle describes the stages of the change. For example, the young men 'grouped together[...] tour the sacred places of the city having first sworn the Ephebic Oath in the sanctuary of Aglaurus on the Acropolis. Then they spend their first years [...] training in military arts [...] They eat together [...] At the start of the second year they display their skills at an assembly [...] the theatre, and are presented with a spear and shield by the city. Then they garrison the frontier posts [...] they are exempted from taxes'. At the end of the second year, they become full citizens. The Aristophanean *Knights* deals with rites of passage (Bowie, p. 45-50). More details related to the adolescent's rite of passage will be part of the analysis of Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

[220] Louis Gernet has written the most acclaimed examination of the relation between religion and law. He examines, among other concepts words such as *hybris* (outrageous behaviour), *categoria* (slander), and *hamartema* (fault) which relate the concepts of religion, family and law. An outline of Gernet's connection to Durkheim, plus a number of other references are to be found in S. C. Humphreys' 'The Work of Louis Gernet' in *History and Theory* 10(1971): 172-196.

in city's social dramas; religious openness towards assimilating various foreign deities becomes the openness of state politics; competition in games transforms into an agonistically forceful, verbal or social game for recognition. The prevailing ideology is based on a constantly reinforced feeling of unity under Athena which defines the borders between the city and all the other Greek cities, and displays itself in a plethora of sharing and acting social practices of democratically oriented city principles.

Before turning to the next ritual, the theatre, it should be emphasised that the implied line of argument, which concerns rituals and concepts derived from them is not that of an evolution – as if they reach a phase of development until the next stage/step is reached. Religious rituals and civil rituals – or social dramas – are parallel to each other, indispensable social practices. In Tedlock's words, each ritual is a 'speaking across'(p.322) in a ceremonial form which unites, and fills people with self-reliance, since they 'cannot only control the external world but can also promote social solidarity'; and he continues: 'There is no way to calculate the extent to which [...] ritual [...] have contributed to the survival of the human species by providing [...] a feeling that life is worth living'[221]. This feeling of solidarity – as a kind of reaffirmation of the space/time they want to control/lock in the memories of their collective actions – can be derived from the Eleusinian mysteries, from a judicial scene at the international court at Hague, or from a dance ritual of Australian aboriginals.

Yes, rituals and concepts derived from them are essential practices of social organizations, as the analysis of the Athenian setting has demonstrated thus far. What changes in human societies have to do with factors such as the amount of human participation, economic constraints, territorial rights, or invasions – the presence or

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[221] Leslie White, *The Concept of Culture* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1973), p. 13.

the absence of which characterise societies as early, contemporary, or complex, and the presence of which rearrange the ways the concepts are expressed: in courts, in public funerals, or in the Assembly. Depending on these factors, the concepts transform and adjust variably in societies.

Athens, as argued, seems to control and promote social solidarity derived from these concepts; at the same time, it transforms them exactly because they promote solidarity, and because the concepts are not ideals, such as the ideal of universal justice – too broad to define a group, too inclusive to guarantee an identity. They are cultural concepts with areas of 'situational adjustment', areas of the past which are adjusted to the present, with 'gaps' which 'require [...] interpretation to be applicable to situations and are full of ambiguities'[222] – concepts which, along with the factors associated with the city, create the myth of it and of Athenian society. And by the range of expressions the cultural elements receive, the society is that of a 'functional toleration' which 'imposes a kind of rules-of–the-game order within which dissent and opposition can operate' (Frye, p. 253).

The discussion on the last of the three main areas of rituals examined in Athens focuses on Dionysus, and the theatre associated with his veneration has the characteristics of a novel expression of ritual, within the framework, yet, of the concepts discussed so far, all in the 'functional toleration' of Athenian society 'within which [...] opposition can operate' – as one concept as old as Greek religion and as new as the politics of Athenian democracy want to demonstrate.

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[222] Sally Moore, *Law as Process: an Anthropological Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 39.

II. 3. The Athenian Theatre

The discussion on theatre aims first, to demonstrate that concepts originating in religion transform into theatrical concepts, and second, that the theatre's energetic connections with society eventually lead to the connection between the performing self and the theatrical character.

Here, then, it is argued, that the theatre in honour of Dionysus is a social ritual like Panathinea, and yet, primarily because it is open to subjective interpretations of myths taking the shape of interpretations of the Athenian culture presented on stage – the central feature of the ritual – it transforms into a new ritual within the ritual, a theatrical performance – the concepts of which have their own dynamic relationship with the society. The theatrical performance, as a synthesis of elements derived from traditional frameworks, individual interpretations of myths, and public response, *rather* than being mainly a ritual/display of the Athenian ideology of superiority, like Panathinea, is more of a display of tolerance – conscious or unconscious – of what Frye calls, 'a society [...] capable of a genuine and functional toleration' (p. 253) within oppositions: it is an official state display *alongside* a display of individual expression, of a seen collective spirit *alongside* a private intellectualism, of national pride *alongside* criticism of that pride, of democratic ideology *and* individual needs, of the splendour of democracy, as it is portrayed in speeches, and the democracy as it probably *should* be performed. Theatre, one can infer, is mostly a display of antithetical forces existing within the society.

Thus, the ritual performed on stage could be characterised as the expression of Athenian culture, and in turn, the Athenian culture could be identified as a performance culture. *Performance*, it follows, as a term used from *this* point on,

refers to a synthesis of aspects of display not only collectively but individually as well, since the theatrical performance contains distinctive elements of individual performance in the form of the writer's text to be performed, and the performance of the individual actors on stage.

The above points are going to be examined as follows. First, to argue on the connection between theatre and society, the discussion begins with the concepts associated with Dionysus and his rituals as adopted by the city: accordingly, Dionysus' invasion of the city initiates turbulence which the city welcomes and endorses – perhaps out of necessity – and eventually, unity comes. Next, the theatre, is analysed in three parts: the first argues that it has some of the characteristics of a social ritual and a civic drama – such as a display of sharing and participation – discussed thus far. The second part argues that within this ritual of the theatre, the individual human factor, through the tragedians' writing, transforms it into a personal expression of city concepts the official city ideology seems to be open to; the created plays, therefore, are transformed into homes of concepts originating from Greek religion but transformed now into distinctively theatrical ones. Finally, the third part argues that the response of the audience may characterise the theatre as the expression of Athenian culture. Thus, the connection between the ritual of the theatre and the society may lead to the connection between the performing self of the Athenian society and the character on the stage.

a. Dionysus and the Great Dionysia

Dionysus, although he lacks Athena's civic consistency and majesty, does not lack her dominance: he is an intruder, and yet the initiator of a whole new drama of rituals – in the city, and on the theatrical stage – which is welcomed by the city, even initiated by it. Dionysus' rituals reproduce the focus of these myths[223] with processions starting from the fields and ending in the city, such as the *Anthestreria*, or starting in city and concluding in the periphery, such as the *Lenea.* The two processions signify the profile of the god, the outsider who becomes an insider, and in that sense, he unifies the city: he is honoured by all; he is popular to all[224]. The much celebrated Great Dionysia[225] includes processions, sacrifices, and *ephebes* (adolescents) ivy-crowned[226], while other processions/festivals show the god's favour to women[227]. In fact, girls may leave their family to escort him to the mountains away from male dominance, in a state of maenadism during the god's mysteries. They form

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[223] Dionysus changes gender, mood, setting, even the rules of the household, since he asks women to forget their marriage obligations and follow him to the mountains He is engaged in a prismatic set of grand rituals – similar or entirely different from Panathinea, or other secret ones, for all the public or only for women, in the civic centre or at its outskirts, with women dressed as maenads and men as satyrs, or, as the case may be, vice versa. Dionysus is the stranger in his myths, who can demand the wife of the king of a city, and Athena, in the fifth-century version of the myth commands king Theseus to allow him to be united with the bride, Ariadne. Dionysus and Ariadne with satyrs on both sides is the subject of the so-called *Pronomos* vase (from J. D. Beazley, 1336.I.) In another Attic myth, the god is Ikarios' guest, and in return for this hospitality, the god gives him the unknown vine (Apollodoros, *Bibl.*, 3.14-7)).

[224] The inscribed deme calendar from Thorikos shows that the demes held sacrifices during the central Dionysiac festivals but so timed the sacrifices as to allow the people to go to the central festival. (A. Henrichs, 'Between Country and City: Cultic Dimensions of Dionysios in Athens and Attica', in M. Griffith and D. J. Mastronade (eds.), *Cabinet of the Muses*, Scholars 260-264. The two processions are described in texts by various writers: the first one, the *Anthesteria*, is described by Thucydides (2.15), Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 960-1, 1000-2, *Knights* 546-8, *Frogs* 211-19), Demosthenes (*In Nearera* 73-78). The second one, the *Lenea*, is described by Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 378, 202, 504-6, *Knights* 546-8, *Frogs* 479), Plato (*Protagoras* 327d).

[225] The Great Dionysia will be discussed in detail later.

[226] Great Dionysia have many similarities with Panathinea in honour of Athena, as all the sources indicate.

[227] The Oschophoria and Haloa were exclusively for women. For example, in *Anthesteria*, the main wine festival, women, the *genairai*, are involved in secret, even wild, ceremonies, but the main event is the sacred marriage between Dionysus and the queen (*basilinna)* of the archon (*basileus).*

an antithesis to the order of the city by refusing their roles[228] as women to be married and give birth to citizens[229].

This ambiguous, multi-faced god seems to partially free Athenians from civic obstacles and obligations, and women from their home obligations. They accept his mysterious personality, mainly through his gift to them – that of wine – the ultimate ingredient in marriage and death rituals alike, in festivals and symposia, a ceremonial component, a *sponde* to a non-conformist city god of mutuality.

Dionysus's rituals are connected with a new concept of unity derived from the fact that as a god, he encloses two elements of unity in one: the outsider and the insider – or the concept of Other with the concept of the Same. The paradox, though, with nearly all of Dionysus' rituals, is not that the Other is just the outsider and the stranger: the Other is the insider who refuses to follow the order of the city – the man who is dressed as a woman, or women transformed into maenads. The Other in Dionysus' rituals might be an ambiguous, wild invader, but he/she might also be the one who looks like the Other, except that it is only another face of the same god, or another face of the same person. Dionysus' concept of unity, therefore, includes elements of otherness, sameness, and ambiguity, all under the god's seemingly one entity.

Additionally, the city as well considers it vital for its identity 'that the savagery of Dionysus to be incorporated'[230] into the city rituals. Characteristically, Seaford

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[228] In other rituals and festivals as well, girls were refusing their roles as wives-to-be: in honour of Artemis, Athenian girls were going to Brauron to enter into a temporary state of becoming 'bears', and then returning tamed in order to get married. (R. Seaford, 'The Eleventh Ode of Bacchylides: Hera, Artemis, and the Absence of Dionysus', in *JHS* 108, pp. 121-122.)

[229] The connection of Dionysus with women is shown from the fact that there is the Dionysus' *thiasos* of women, which is apparently a survival of an old cultic as well as a social unit; the unit seemed to be connected neither with the household nor with the city (W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 277-8.). By the fifth century, the unit might have included solely males without them being dressed as satyrs (Herodotus, 4.79-80); their appearance, dressed as women, is, actually, connected with the initiation into mysteries which transformed the initiate into another identity (Seaford, p. 273); but it is also as if Dionysus seems eager to relieve people and assist them into assuming a new role in time and place, by performing in their new costume old desires and secret passions.

comments about the ritual of *Anthesteria*, and Dionysus' demand to marry the queen: 'the invasion of the royal household by a publicly escorted stranger who symbolically destroys the potential autonomy of the royal family by having sex with the queen is of benefit to the whole polis', he writes (p. 266). Apparently it is: his eccentric presence, the city and its people, as a social organisation, control the invader *and* the royal family – instead of them controlling the city.

Indeed, the city ideology incorporates Dionysus' official invasion of Athens by turning the Great Dionysia into a civic ritual[231], a display as grand as Panathinea, the main components of which are the procession, and the competition of plays in the theatre built under the Acropolis. Dionysus' veneration, therefore, promotes the idea of openness[232] which eventually is transformed on the theatrical stage into a variety of antithetical subjects and characters performed on stage.

Briefly, the procession of Dionysus's statue from Athens to Eleutherae, and back to Athens, is followed by sacrifices and hymns, and other minor ceremonial presentations of the playwrights and actors who participate in the competition. The

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[230] Seaford, R., *Reciprocity and Ritual,* p. 259.

[231] Although the date the Great Dionysia became state ritual is a matter of some dispute, the view of most scholars tends to be that it is around 500 BC. One point of interest which supports this view is that the date of the 'first, purpose-built theatre' under the Acropolis is, according to archaeologists ' around 500 BC.' (Paul Cartledge, ' "Deep Plays": Theatre as Process in Greek Civic Life' , in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy,* ed. by P.E.Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; repr. 1999), pp. 3-35 (p. 23). And although the plays written for the celebrations of Dionysus cover more than a century, the surviving plays cover a period of seventy years starting in 472, with the *Persians:* (P.E. Easterling 'A Show for Dionysus' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, pp. 36-53 (p.46)). These dates, therefore, are within the time period this argument aims to cover – as far as the concepts are concerned which are found in religious rituals, transformed into city rituals, and turned into concepts related to individual performance and interaction.

[232] Actually, the fact is characteristic that the Dionysus of the Great Dionysia is the one who comes from the village of Eleutherae – close to the borders of Attica with Boeotia – and he becomes Dionysus, the liberator, possibly because the name of the village is very close to the Greek word for freedom (Pausanias, 1.29.2). In that sense, being the outsider in the role of the insider, he is the only god who brings together the rural with the urban community (Oddone Longo, 'The Theatre of the Polis' in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*, ed. by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 12-19 (pp. 16-17)), and he creates a unity out of them, one community of two.

concluding massive procession[233] – packed with sacred objects and offerings – ends with the sacrifice of a bull at Dionysus's temple, while at the theatre[234], other ceremonies including libation by the generals and a parade of the orphans of war take place. In contrast to the procession in the civic centre, during the public funerals, which symbolises Athenian dominance, the space of the Dionysian procession, from the centre to the periphery and back to the centre, symbolises the unity between urban and rural communities which is central to the city, not peripheral: the theatre where the procession ends, is right next to the agora, and the incorporation of Dionysia into the democratic ideology is symbolically formalised as well .

Besides the idea of unity, as is argued, what is also distinctive about Dionysia, in contrast to *Lenea* or the other rituals, is the element of display for purposes not strictly domestic: the presence of generals and the parade of the orphans of the war include messages for Athens' allies and enemies alike: they emphasise the political and military aspect of the city[235], a human display of the city's politics.

However, the magnificent procession is not the distinctive element of the Dionysia: the competition[236] of three tragedies and a satyr play each day for three days[237] judged either by the ten generals or by individuals appointed by lot[238], is the high moment of the grand ritual, and it combines, as is argued, city concepts of display, unity, participation, sharing, and ambiguity. Now, the idea of competition in connection with

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[233] Descriptions of the procession and the ceremonies, in all their splendour, are given in the following sources: Dem., *Against Midias*, 51-54, 22; Arist., *Atheneon Politia*,56.4; Aristoph., *Acharnians*, 240-65; Isocr., *On the Peace*, 82; Aischines, *Against Ktesiphon*, 41-43, 153-54.

[234] According to Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p.11-15, the theatrical performance originated at the agora and moved to the theatre of Dionysus after the auditorium collapsed.

[235] Simon Goldhill, 'The Audience of Athenian Tragedy' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, pp. 54-68 (pp. 60-61).

[236] Aristoph., *Birds*, 786-89,

[237] Extensive discussion of the competition, and the duration of it, is made by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, in the 'Introduction', in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?*, pp. 3-11 (p. 4).

[238] Aristoph., *Acharnians*, 1224f ; Lysias, (*On the Wound of Premeditation)*,3. In Simon Goldhill's 'The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology' in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?*, pp. 97-129 (p.100), the discussion focuses on the concept of judges in the city.

various kinds of rituals is not novel; neither is the idea of drama novel, nor of a drama competition related to gods[239]. The question, therefore, before dealing with any other point, has to do with the persistent connection of Dionysus with the plays: why is he connected with the theatre more than any other god?

The most immediate answer to the question of the origin of the dramatic performance must incorporate an element of speculation, but it seems to have originated from religious dramas. The exact origin of tragedy and the satyr, and their association with Dionysus is quite unclear, but, as it is believed, they emerged from dithyrambs, traditional songs performed around the altar of Dionysus by a chorus of fifty men[240]. According to Aristotle, they originated from improvisations: the first by the 'authors of the dithyramb, the other with those of the phallic songs, which still survive as institutions in many of our cities',[241] and he adds, that after a number of changes, tragedy comes to 'its attaining to its natural form'. Aristotle's theory is assisted by archaeological findings which verify the link between theatre and religion: specifically in Ikarion, a mountain village in Attica, where the closeness of a temple, an altar, and the playing area are quite striking[242]. Also, in other countries, drama originated from religious rituals: the 'religious and ritual origins of the Jewish drama,

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[239] The theatre of Syracuse, among other theatres, in the early fifth century is devoted to Apollo (P. E. Easterling, 'From Repertoire to Canon', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; repr. 1999), pp. 211-227 (p. 224)). Also, Dionysus is but one among other deities associated with dancing, masks, mysteries and ecstasies in myths – components related to drama: Artemis, Demeter, Zeus have a considerable attendance in these kinds of ritual practices surrounding them (Easterling, 'A Show for Dionysus', pp. 36-53 (p. 45)).

[240] Phyllis Hartnoll, *A Concise History of the Theatre* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), p. 8.

[241] Aristotle, *Rhetoric and Poetics*, trans. by Ingram Bywater (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), 1449a2-25, a37-b9). Aristotle writes 200 years after the event he describes. The dithyramb is a frenzied choric hymn and dance in honour of Dionysus. Phallic songs were related to the cult of the phallus as an embodiment of generative power.

[242] David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.27. In another Attican deme, Thorikos, the temple of Dionysus is on the right side of the theatre - the only intact theater of the 5th century - and the altar on the left (ibid., p. 31). At Rhamnous – north deme of Attica – according to archaeologists, 'the obvious theatricality of the setting lies not in the playing space itself but in the processional route that leads to it [...] A series of shrines and public inscriptions mark out the area as a centre for the community, and one inscription found in the "theatre" specifically refers to the site as the "agora".' (Wiles, p. 24, 25)

the Chinese drama, all European Christian drama and probably the Indian drama' are quite certain[243].

Speculations also surround the occasion of the very first time, during the ritual, that an individual stepped forth from the chorus of these hymns and answered back to them, initiating, therefore, the concept of the individual actor on stage – the concept of One. Regardless of the exact time this happened, *that* individual seems to have all the characteristics associated with Dionysus, because *that* member of a group, like another Dionysus, included, just by being alone on stage, concepts all the others in the group included collectively up to that moment: the one sings alone as they were singing together before; the one moves alone as they were moving together before; the one performs alone as they were performing together; and the one is the actor opposite the singing and dancing group the one was a member of before: Thespis[244] is the first to create a space of his own, to wear a mask in order to show that he does not just narrate a story, but that he represents a character of the story[245], and that he begins a dialogue with the others, probably rather unconsciously first – just as another ceremonial gesture, a need to look at the others of his group, to face a close group, and communicate with them from another position – slightly different from the one practiced by them all along during the ritual. Nietzsche describes that age of innocence of drama history as follows: the people were 'a community of unconscious actors all of whom see one another as enchanted [...]. Audience and chorus were

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[243] Marjorie Boulton, *The Anatomy of Drama* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 194.
[244] Plutarch, *Solon*, 29.6. 'According to tradition' Thespis won a prize for his tragedy in the Great Dionysia around the year 534.
[245] The discussion on the use of mask is largely concentrated by most classicists on the rituals related to Dionysus, but, according to Jennifer Wise, in *Dionysus Writes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Thespis used the mask for 'practical reasons', to show that the story which he is about to tell will be told through 'visual representation'. As Wise writes, masks were not used in any other performance of epic or lyric before, because the performers were narrating the story, they were not playing the story (p. 61-2).

never fundamentally set over against each other'[246], as if they were exchanging the roles of actors and spectators in a natural sequence of roles to be taken.

And although the origins of the dramatic performance are quite uncertain, Dionysus manages to be persistent as the god connected with this dramatic show; theatres are named after him around the country, and as late as the third century BC, an actor's union takes the name 'artists of Dionysus', with its officers being priests (Arist., *Rhetoric*, 1405a23). Again, the speculations[247] differ over the origins of the undeniable fact of Dionysus' association with the theatre, but all focus on his elusive identity, or his changing roles in order to argue that only such a god could be the patron of dramatic performance which includes the playing/performing by actors on stage of identities different from their own. A. Henrichs' exegesis is that it is because he 'more than any other Greek god lacks a constituent identity. Duality, contrast and reversal are his hallmark'[248]: like Dionysus, as Henrichs emphasises, the actors are behind a mask, and the individual who is portrayed with the mask is actually two persons in one. Another interpretation is that, Dionysus is a prototype of a paradox, a life-giving and a 'potentially destructive power' (Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre* p. 13). Accordingly, the paradox with the actor on stage is that somebody performs on stage, but his mask does cover him, and the audience does not know who is behind the mask, and therefore, there is an element of ambiguity about the person on stage.

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[246] Frederich Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', in Frederich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. by Francis Golffing (New York: Anchor Books, 1872; repr. 1956), pp. 1-146 (pp. 51-55).

[247] Again according to Wise, p. 3: 'the theater [sic] emerged as the first text-based art in the western poetic tradition, as an art form whose central genetic features depended on the alphabetical literacy of its first practitioners. Theater may originally have been a Dionysian art form, for there is no denying the identity of drama's patron deity; but this particular god presided over theater only because, by the time of his appearance in Greece, Dionysus could read and write.'

[248] A. Henrichs, 'Changing Dionysiac Identities', in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol 3*, ed. by B. M Meyer and E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortran Press, 1982), pp. 137-160 (p. 158).

Furthermore, Dionysus is associated with myths emphasising his Otherness[249], with him being a stranger who invades city life. The same happens on stage: the actors invade the stage to perform the role of someone else, and it is as if they invade another human being's life portrayed in the narrative.

All these ideas justifiably relate Dionysus to theatre, but the most convincing one is the theory which connects the actor with the spectator since the one on stage does not exist without the one off stage, and therefore, this theory not only refers to the nature of Dionysus, but to the idea of ritual which interconnects actors with spectators. As such, Easterling's theory has an air of truth to it because it refers to the very notion of the theatrical performance. Dionysus' unprecedented connection with theatre, she assures, starts with the nature of his mysteries, in which he is both, the leader/performer of the action of his *thiasos,* and the master spectator of the ritual in his honour. This duality 'suggests that the drama was felt to have power to generate interactive response between players and audience' (p.51). If Dionysus is both the initiator of the action and the seer of the initiation, the performer, and the ritual itself – since the ritual is for him – if he is the subject and the object of the action – or is it the performance? – then, the action on stage is only part of the action without spectators to watch, and, consequently, watching a ritual is another way of performing a ritual. This perception of the theatrical performance which underlines the concept of display in its double form seems to be the prevailing reason for naming Dionysus the god of the theatrical performance[250]. In that sense, the original concept of ritual display

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[249] P.E. Easterling 'A Show for Dionysus', p.45,47; Edith Hall, 'The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy,* pp. 93-127 (p. 95).

[250] One word which connects the act of seeing with the seer as a subject and object of performance is the word *theoria.* On one level, *theoria* means the act of watching. The term implies sight-seeing as well. Herodotus (1.29) says that Solon left Athens for that reason (*kata theorian*). On an intellectual level, it refers to the philosopher's viewing of the world (mainly under Plato's influence). Further on, *theoros* is the one who attends religious festivals, games, assemblies, and he is also attended by the others (Demosth. (18.315) describes himself in courts as 'the object of judgment, the object of gaze' (*krinomai kai theoromai*)). *Theoros* is a state official as well, an ambassador, impressively dressed,

transforms into the concept of theatrical display according to which the actors play in order to be seen, and the spectators attend in order for the actors to play for them.

So far, therefore, it has been argued that concepts related to Greek religion – unity, openness, ambiguity, sameness and otherness – transform and become concepts interrelated with each other, but at the same time, distinctively theatrical – on stage or off stage: for example, the concept of the unity of the group transforms into the unity of the dialogue between the actor and the group/chorus opposite to him; the concept of Otherness may also transform into the Otherness of the separation between those playing on stage and those watching the ones on stage; or it can be the presence of a single actor, the Other who is not part of the group/chorus as it used to be; as for the concept of ambiguity, it prevails on the theatrical stage related primarily to the identity of the person behind the mask, and with the element of communication between the actor and the others on stage, or between the ones on stage and the ones in the seats of the theatre.

b. The Theatre as a Social Ritual

Turning to the City Dionysia as a whole, the ritual in honour of Dionysus is, as argued, a social ritual: besides the display of the procession and the competition, the sharing of various roles by the citizens, in order for the theatrical performance to take place, is evident in official records.

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even crowned, presenting therefore, a spectacle (*theorima*) of himself. Lastly, 'theatre' and 'theory' derive from the same root. The theatre is a 'seeing place', but the seeing of it implies a 'process by which the mind inspects and possesses an inspection, as it possesses its own thoughts.' (Michael Goldman, 'The Actor's Freedom', in *The Making of Theatre*, ed. by Robert W. Corrigan (London: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981), pp. 49-57 (p. 51)).

That the theatrical experience is a social show as well as a synthesis of roles of individuals is demonstrated by the fact that the city is eager to show the participation and its joined effort in writing. There is a stone[251] with an inscription on it dating from the year 459 BC: it contains a series of names, one after the other, the most known being that of Aeschylus next to the verb 'taught'. The theme of this inscription is the prize-winners at the city Dionysia in the spring[252]of that year. The name of the official, Philocles, at the top of the list marks the year of the competition; then the winners of the boys' choir followed by the *choregos*[253]; the men's choir and their sponsor's name; the list ends with the performers of comedy and tragedy and their sponsors. Aeschylus' name monopolises the reader's interest, but for the Athenians, he is the playwright who 'taught' the actors because he wrote the play. He is the one who is paid by another citizen, and he is the one who will honour the boys' choir and the men's choir in an event that has taken place under Philocles, whose name was given to the year, and in the city's name. The city exists as a list on this inscription, and it then becomes the audience of the play by Aeschylus.

Furthermore, the whole city[254] is in the theatre of Dionysus – built in such a way and in such a location as to acknowledge 'its physical situation within the city, offering public and open space'[255] – and they come from all the tribes; most

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[251] Athens Epigraphic Museum.

[252] According to Rehm (*Greek Tragic Theatre*, p.16) the timing of the competition of tragedies and comedies in late March enables them 'to have a strong political impact, since the annual election of the ten generals (military commanders chosen by tribe) followed soon after the festival as did the Assembly meetings that would decide on military campaigns and strategies, or on initiatives for peace'. This explanation about the timing seems to be the most correct.

[253] *Choregos* is the person whose private funds supported the event as a public service. Information about the concept of *choragos*, and the cost involved is given, among others, by Aristotle (*Atheneon Politia,* 56.3), Demosthenes, (*Against Midias*, 13-14, 156), Lysias, (*Defence Against a Charge of Bribery*, 1-5), and Aristophanes (*Acharnians, 1150-55).*

[254] Plato (*Symposium*, 175e) writes that about 30,000 people were in the theatre; as for seating arrangements, information comes, from among others, Aristophanes, *Frogs*,297, *Birds*, 793-96, Demosthenes. *Against Midias,* 1.78-79. Aischines, *Embassy,*3.

[255] Rush Rehm, *The Play of Space: Spatial Transformation in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p.36

probably, each tribe sits in one block of seats[256], while the seats of honour are given by the state to priests, archons and generals, as well as to the orphans of war. There are also speculations about whether women attend the plays from the back seats[257], but taking into consideration the fact that women as widows of war are permitted to attend public funerals, and women are participants in Panathinea, it is quite possible that they are not excluded from attending. Besides, the sources which do refer to women seem to be enough[258]. What is certain is that a girl participates in the procession to the theatre, and the priestess of the Parthenon is in most public rituals.

As for the whole audience[259], for Socrates, they make him wonder about the relationship between performer and 'performed upon' functioning in the theatre and other public forums:

> Isn't it the public themselves who are sophists[260] on a grand scale, and give a complete training to young and old, men and women, turning them into just the sort of people they want [...]

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[256] Pickard-Cambridge discusses extensively on seating arrangements (pp. 268, 270).

[257] In Aristophanes' *Peace,* 962-7, and *Frogs,*1050-1, *Women at the Thesmophoria,* 390-97 there is reference to women in the crowd; there is also a story (Pickard-Cambridge, p. 265) that Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 'horrified women into miscarriages'. According to Simon Goldhill ('The Audience of the Athenian Tragedy' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, pp.62-66) the facts are not enough to prove that women are in the audience. In Plato's *Laws* (658c-d), there is a rèference to the fact that tragedy is for all, women as well, but, according to Goldhill, this is not enough . His best proof is the fact that although there is plenty of reference to women's participation in other festivals, in this one, there is none. For Jeffery Henderson ('Women and the Athenian Dramatic Festivals', *TAPA*,121 (1991), pp.133-47(pp.136-38)) on the other hand, the presence of women in the rear seats is certain, while the writer also assumes that the girl (virgin) whose presence is certain at the ceremony before the performance must stay to watch the performance as well. Finally, for Rehm (*The Play of Space*, p.50), the presence of women is certain: first, because openness goes along with any cult related to Dionysus, and therefore, the audience of the theatre includes everybody, and second, because Athenian women, although they were living in a patriarchal society, apparently had many reasons to be out of the house – more than their small amount of political power would suggest (p.54).

[258] Eric Csapo and William J. Slater (*The Context of Ancient Drama*, p. 186) believe that, for certain, women were in the crowd.

[259] As the sources attest, the spectators must have been quite eager to go to and attend (Xenophon. *Oeconomicus*, 3.8), but at the same time, they were very noisy (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1175b, Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 56-59, Demosthenes, *On the Crown*,2.62, *On the False Embassy*, 3.37).

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> when they crowd into the seats in the assembly or law courts, or the theatre?[261]

Indeed, Socrates' comment about the relation between the crowds who attend any and all social rituals turns the attendance of the audience into what Goldhill calls the basic 'political act'[262]: each of them in the audience can imagine themselves converted into speakers in front of the same audience they were members of before – in the gymnasiums or the courtrooms[263] where they expose themselves in front of others in a society of rituals, athletic events and instrumental contests of aulos[264], among others. They go to the courtrooms, or to Pnyx where the competitive spirit of free-born Athenians displays itself at the meeting of the Assembly, and they appeal to reason or morality in an effort to persuade (Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre*, p. 4) themselves and others on issues relating to city policy. There they are like actors performing before an audience: they improvise, persuade, deceive, and stand up for their ideas. Or they can be actors in various other roles as citizens, since citizenship[265] does not mean only *isigoria* – having the equal right of free speech. The actualisation of their roles as citizens varies, and it is not only related to legal procedures taking place in courts, or going to the Assembly: citizenship in Athens means multi-social dimensions involving practical participations in the state (Manville, p.5) and not just debating about politics. As the system works, the role of citizenship for one means making 'substantial payments to the Treasury [...], and serving as Trierach'[266]; for

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[261] Plato's *Republic*, 4. 92a-b.
[262] Simon Goldhill, 'Programme Notes', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* ed. by Goldhill and Osborne, pp. 1-29 (p. 5).
[263] The tragedies contain many courtroom scenes; e.g., in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and Euripides' *Hecuba*.
[264] Peter Wilson in 'The Aulos in Athens', (in Goldhill and Osborne, pp. 58-95) analyses the importance of this musical instrument in the festivals.
[265] 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community and who are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endured': T. H. Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class' in *Class, Citizenship and Social Development: Essays*, (Garden City, N.Y.,1964), pp. 71-134 (p. 84).
[266] Antiphon (in *Minor Attic Orators), First Tetralogy* II,12.

another, it means fighting 'in four sea battles, contributing to many war levies, and performing many other public services'(Lysias, 25.12); for Nicias, a rich man, admired for his virtues, but not interested in politics, citizenship means leading the expedition to Sicily out of his duty to his country, despite his political or war convictions (Plutarch, *Nicias* 2).

At the theatre, the people's roles blend and are expressed at various levels in one single social practice, a synthesis called theatrical performance. Only citizens can serve as *choregoi*[267], and as members of the chorus, yet, like Panathinea, a theatrical performance engages all the participants in a physical, social, psychological interaction, and eventually in an *ergon* since the presence of spectators affects the performers, or, actually, there is no performance without spectators, and to 'take responsibility in front of an audience implies a degree of consciousness working on both sides' (Carlson, p. 38-42).

Mainly though, like public funerals, the theatrical performance puts together 'many apparently separated things' and magnifies the identity of ritual performers 'through their roles in traditional groups and sub-groups'[268] since it magnifies not only the public roles of citizens, but the role of women in the poets' plays, particularly the tragedians' ones. In that sense, the 'ritual performers' include private roles – the roles of *oikos* members – channelled as they are into a city interaction as official as any interaction taking place at the Assembly or the courtrooms by Athenian citizens. Another dimension of the similarity between public funerals and tragedies, as discussed by Taxidou, is the fact that death and mourning – through the presence of women in both social rituals – becomes a 'praxis of life' for the city, an identical part with the ' political and discursive world of the male'(pp. 8, 89).

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[267] Easterling, 'From Repertoire to Canon', p.213.
[268] Victor Turner, *The Drums of Affliction*, pp.269.275.

But *the* central role are of those on theatrical stage: they wear masks and deceive themselves and the crowd with elaborate costumes and high-heeled shoes; they are the same people who turn into playwrights, or actors, or spectators, and what they all display at the theatre comes as a natural outgrowth of a city system which affects the lives of its citizens, and engages them in the playing of roles – sometimes even confronting ones.

Finally, the theatrical performance promotes a strong feeling of solidarity perceived as such through the analysis of effects one might characterise as political, emotional, and moral related to the state's and the people's reactions to the tragedies because they all participate in the same *ergon*.

c. The Dramatists' Theatre – or the Dramatists' Democracy?

Yet, before dealing with the effect of tragedies on people, it would be unwise not to deal first with the tragedians' plays/texts – this novel form of writing, and the concept of writing behind it, in Athens. As argued in the beginning of the chapter, literacy is one of the factors that contribute to the emancipation of Athens, and to a large extent, to its difference from other cities, since the abundance of texts about the Greek world and Athens comes from those living in Athens. Tragedies have their own dynamic presence among the Athenian texts for reasons related with the ritual of Dionysus, the oral tradition, and the imagination of the tragedians.

As argued, the city controls the ceremonial events, the dates, the participation and position of spectators; what it does not control is the written plays[269] performed on stage. They are not judged in the competition, because what *is* judged is the theatrical performance – the seen event by the seers.

The fact that the text is not judged means that a number of conclusions can be drawn about the connections among the city, the individuals, and the concepts surrounded the theatrical performance. The text/narrative of the theatrical performance gives emphasis to the factor of literacy in this particular period in Athens, which, according to anthropological investigation, decisively marks the city culture and the interaction of the individuals in it. First, the extent to which writing enters the Athenians' lives will be examined, and then, conclusions will be drawn about the reason why the city does not judge texts and is open to the playwrights' expressed views.

In Greece of the fifth century BC, the individual came from an Archaic world which had functioned on an oral basis, in which memorisation and recitation were taken for granted. The Homeric heroes lived in an oral society, as confirmed by archaeology, and Havelock, from his extensive studies on writing, confirms that between Homer's and Plato's time – the eighth to the fifth centuries – society's turning into a literate one was a process of 'slow degrees'[270]. The earliest written law carved on a temple wall in Dreros, Crete has been dated to around the middle of the

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[269] Let it briefly be repeated at this point, that for the Athenians, theatre, or more precisely tragedy, is a form of writing – not a genre of literature, since the word 'literature' does not exist – and poets or orators, as Goldhill writes, can all be perceived as *sophoi* – wise men – a term 'indicating an authoritative, public position'. Their public role, he continues, is justified by the fact that with their poems, speeches, or songs, they can contribute to the making of good citizens. Aristotle and Plato, with the rise of philosophy, differentiate history from philosophy, or poetry, but still, all are forms of writing mainly judged through their effect on the public. Simon Goldhill, 'Literary History Without Literature: Reading Practices in the Ancient World', *Substance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism* 28:1 (1999), 57-89(pp. 58, 60).

[270] Eric Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 29.

seventh century (Wise, p.124), and in Athens, Dracon's and Solon's legislation in writing was not earlier than a century after this (ibid., p. 127). In Athens, the organized teaching of letters in primary schools was not established before the late fifth century (Havelock, p. 87), and it was during the sixth century that Pisistratos ordered the writing down of the Homeric epics in their present form. Yet, the teaching of letters was, most possibly, not only for boys, but for girls, as well (Wise, p.77), not just a privilege of an elite class[271], such as that of priests in Egypt who were responsible for sacred, holy texts[272], but of private individuals who, according to Wise, were the first to use writing (p.104).

Athens was more ready and eager to convert to literacy than any other Greek city, as historical research demonstrates, so eager in fact, that it was the Athenians who report on the history of the other cities which were ready to legislate but not always willing to report in writing on their norms and deeds. In the case of Sparta, for example, a Spartan law forbids the writing of laws (Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 1:28, 3-5), while it is beyond any doubt that there was very little written by Spartans, and less than little written by Spartans about Sparta[273]. The frequently expressed frustration of archaeologists about the lack of written sources other than Athenian ones, most probably, does not reflect pure incidents of chance in the matter of the finding of literary sources. The Athenian exuberance for writing during the fifth century is correctly taken as an Athenian phenomenon fortunate enough to be as such, relating objects and subjects on a primary basis for displaying the city as a whole, and marking a period of multiple inventions with the slow but steady invasion of written words.

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[271] In the *Apology* (26d-e), Plato mentions that Anaxagoras' treatise was sold for a drachma in the marketplace.
[272] Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion: an Interpretation* (New York, N Y: Harper and Row, 1948; repr. 1961), pp. 135-6).
[273] Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (London: W. W. Norton, 1943; repr. 1999), p. 119.

Yet, the transition from a totally oral system of communication to a combination of oral and written communication can never have been an overnight achievement. In central Europe, as an example, village birth registers there started being quite common by the second half of the eighteenth century, but 'individual data could only be linked by oral history even when written entries were found'[274]. M. T. Clanchy, as well, in his study of the spread of literacy in England between 1066 and 1307 describes an analogous situation: whereas up to that time, people 'hear' a dying man's last will, after preliterate times, they slowly switch to 'see' a seal on a document[275] verifying thus the legality of a man's will: seen objects replace words heard 'exclusively' by ear.

In the Athenian era of transition, the dominance of the hearing of someone's word from the *Odyssey* (3.93-95) becomes slowly less valid than seeing something with one's own eyes (Thuc., 6.53.3, 60.I). As for the letters, they, slowly as well, turn the communication into a visual adventure of abstract thought rather than a hearing certainty resulting from direct contact with a person, and the people need time to assimilate to the new symbols. At times, they express themselves in old terms, or they refuse to see the benefit of them. The texts of that period in Athens are swamped with examples of a mixture of such a terminology, but a characteristic one can be found in Euripides' *Hippolytus*: the husband finds a tablet next to his wife' corpse and exclaims: 'The tablet cries aloud, it cries aloud, and Death is its song!' (877-880). Besides the fact that the presence of the note shows that husbands and wives can read and write, the message literally 'speaks' for itself as Havelock comments:

> If the message is a song or a verse sung aloud, you don't

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[274] Istvan Gyorgy Toth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2000), p. 162.
[275] *From Memory to Written Text: England, 1066-1307* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 203.

see it. If […] it is a written document, it can't sing to you.

But the logic of either/or does not belong in these words.

They open a window on a cultural process of transition,

in which collision and contradiction are of the essence.

[…] a singer, a reciter, memorizer is learning to read and

write – but at the same time [they] continue to sing (p. 22).

As it is, some people are more willing than others to accept easily the new form of communication, while others dismiss it altogether. The most celebrated anti-writer, Socrates, dismisses writing, calling it a mechanism 'to remind him who knows [about] things that have been written'(*Phaedrus*, 275e); another time, he names certain speakers he meets as 'papyrus rolls, being able neither to answer your questions nor to ask themselves'(*Protagoras*, 329a). Yet, Plato writes about Socrates' teaching associating thus the oral tradition with written texts – his own: his 'dialogues are not quite speech and not quite prose, but certain elements of both'[276]. Thucydides, on the other hand, dismisses, even ridicules the ones who rely on hearing rather than seeing, and he boasts about his reporting of events as he has witnessed them (1.21,22).

They all assimilate slowly, therefore, to the idea of various forms of writing – from laws, to speeches, to history writing – all new forms of communication, yet, the epics' relation to writing shows an entirely different situation, it is argued, which affects the tragedians' innovative spirit.

The epics existed before writing, and as such, they were connected to oral recitation, but most important is the fact that the epics for Athenians, and for all Greeks, were their collective memory, their identity as Greeks, and the locus of their religion, since Greeks do not have holy scripts, and the epics are not the privilege of

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[276]Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998), p. 154.

priests. The epics are what has been called 'strict tradition'[277], and to change the tradition is usually considered 'dangerous to the survival of it'[278]. The epics remain unchanged, safely locked and recited orally, not performed in written form during this period. Writing, on the other hand, does not touch the oral tradition: it is an entirely new form of communication, and therefore, it is free to look at the past from a new perspective, entirely its own – as the difference between myth and history, or poetry and history demonstrate, as Aristotle writes about it (*Poetics,* I 451b1-8). Writing, therefore, becomes a way of creating various forms of expression, even of altering 'established rules of storytelling', and creating new forms of stories which suit personal attitudes and purposes (Wise p.59).

It is by this time that the dramatists begin to deal with the epic stories, to change them in order to 'suit' their own personal ideas, and, as Aristotle affirms, not only can they change them, but they must (*Poetics*, I 453b25) create new stories out of the old to be performed on stage, since the plays are entirely new creations which leave the tradition untouched, and as Wise has written about the difference between the oral poet and the literate poet, the first must 'conserve', the second must 'show invention'(p. 60).

Literacy, therefore, to return to the Athenian theatre, not only marks a period of transition in Athens, but it frees individuals from past restrictions, and it gives them the opportunity to express themselves, even asks them to be innovative. Dramatists, in particular, within the display of the City Dionysia, in their roles as the makers of comedies, but most particularly, tragedies performed on stage, innovate through writing, and their plays convey, on the one hand, the openness of Athenian democracy that Thucydides brags about (2.39), and on the other, the individual perception of this

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[277] C. M. Bowra, *Landmarks in Greek Literature* (Cleveland, OH: Meridian, 1966; repr. 1969), p. 56.
[278] Albert Bates Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 130.

democracy; on the one side, education[279] through freedom (Frye, p.260), and on the other, freedom to express personal views, even antithetical to the ones espoused by the city ideology.

Clearly, besides the variety of the plots from the same story[280], the three dramatists of the fifth century, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides write plays not only about men working as trireme oarsmen as in *Ajax*, but about Homeric heroes, like Ajax, who are neglected by their friends; their plays not only contain court scenes as in *Oresteia*, but private scenes of family disputes as in Sophocles' *Electra*, or scenes in ladies' boudoirs, as in *Hippolytus*; they not only have the chorus praising the city of Athens as in *Oedipus at Colonus*, but women like Antigone who – confronting openly the authorities as if she were a man/citizen – defends her right to respect family laws instead of state laws; they are not only about pilgrims expressing respect for the oracle of Delphi as in *Oedipus Rex*, but they may contain Sophocles' echo of his voice doubting the rightness of Apollo's oracle in *Electra*; they are not only about kings such as Theseus, but women like Hecuba cursing the misery of war. And then, the class of slaves[281] – almost non-existent in the official ideology – play decisive roles in tragedies such as in *Hippolytus* because slaves know important secrets of their masters. The myths, therefore, offered to the tragedians are used by them, as Rehm writes, 'to explore the world of the audience; they do not simply exploit the world of the audience to justify myth'[282].

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[279] As P. Cartledge writes, participation in various kinds of democratic events was considered an education for Athenian citizens (in 'Deep Plays', p.19).
[280] Peter Burian, 'Myth into *muthos*: The Shaping of Tragic Plot', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, pp. 178-210 (p. 183).
[281] Some estimates raise the number of slaves to 60,000 during the fifth and fourth centuries, but other sources mention about 20,000. Some rich citizens could have about one hundred, and Nicias was reported to have 1,000 slaves (Moses I. Finley, 'Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour', *Historia* 8 (1959), pp. 148-9).
[282] *The Play of Space*, p.24.

Furthermore, all this array of women, slaves, and foreigners who do not constitute the official body of Athenian democracy, make justifiable Aristophanes' presentation in his *Frogs* (949-52) of a Euripides boasting about the fact that his tragedy is more democratic than the Athenian democracy which does not give equal political[283] rights to all. And the fact that modern critics have been calling Euripides both[284] feminist and misogynist indicate the wide variety of approaches he employs in his dealings with his female characters[285]. Or to put it differently, the tragedians' plays, 'overleap those narrowly restricted notions of democracy and free speech which mark [...] documents of Athenian reality, such as historiography and oratory'[286]. Indeed, dilemmas raised on the interconnection between tragedians and tragedy, and tragedies and politics compose a challenging subject for historians and classicists – mainly because Aeschylus is diversely different from Euripides, and Sophocles is in a class of his own – in their dealings with myths, characters, and politics, yet, the solid pole of reference, identical to all three is their awareness of the tension[287] between the old traditional roles of the family members represented by women, and the new collective roles of the state represented by men. Simultaneously, the presence of men and women on stage cries out to the tragedians' strong desire to deal with individual lives and not social categories[288] of people.

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[283] The political position of women in Athens will be discussed in the following chapter.

[284] Michael Gagarin, 'Women's Voices in Attic Oratory', in *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, ed. by André Lardnois and Laura McClure(Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.161-176(p.161). The one school presents them as mute and obedient, away from politics and public life, and the other, as individuals who participate in public affairs and have opinions of their own. the next chapter will discuss analytically the role of women in Athens.

[285] Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 177.

[286] Edith Hall, 'The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy', pp. 93-126 (p. 125).

[287] Sue Blundell believes that all this array of women in their various roles on stage indicates the 'anxiety' of the tragedians about the position of women (p.180), while Taxidou (*Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning)* calls tragedy 'a conflicting topos'(p.5).

[288] Jeffrey Henderson 'Attic Comedy, Frank Speech, and Democracy' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, ed. by Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (London: Harvard University Press, 2001) pp.255-273 (p.269).

The tragedians, therefore, create a multi-vocal democracy on stage endorsed as it is however by the Athenian ideology, and in that sense, the Athenian drama – despite titles[289] of articles which emphasise its lack of democracy – has a lot to do with democracy as it is viewed by the tragedians/members of the city of Athens.

From the above brief survey of tragedy's subjects, it can be concluded that the original concept of religious openness transformed afterwards into the democratic concept of openness, is now transformed on stage as theatrical openness of subjects presented on stage. Also, the concept of unity and otherness are represented by the presence of all on stage. And eventually, all these characters imply the existence of competition among social beings performing their acts, being in conflict or contradiction with other characters, and forces of the social environment as presented in the plays.

Be that as it may, the above presentation of theatrical concepts related to the voices of imagination on the Athenian theatre stage have a strong resemblance to the voices of the Other[290], those voices that anthropologists try to find the expression of not in the speeches of public orators, or from those who say what people ought to do, but in those who can express how people actually feel[291], and in those which express the consciousness of a culture and an individual[292]. The playwrights seem to present that other face of people who question, react, suffer, or even criticise the authorities and

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[289] The title is 'Nothing to Do with Democracy: Athens Drama and the *Polis*', as mentioned earlier, and Rhodes emphasises the fact that the Athenian drama could have been a product of any Greek city. and not just of the democratic city of Athens; in his article however, he refers mainly to the institutional framework which has resemblances to that found in other Greek cities, yet, the tragedians and their employment of a variety of individual voices of dramatic characters who comment variously on problems of politics seem to be missing from his study. One wonders if a study on the Athenian drama can omit a definite and extended analysis of tragedians' characters and their voices – particularly of those of female characters.

[290] Valentine E. Daniel, 'From an Anthropologist's Point of View: The Literary', in *Culture/Contexture: Explorations in Anthropology and Literary Studies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 1-12 (p. 7).

[291] Caroline B. Brettell, 'The Individual/Agent and Culture/Structure in the History of the Social Sciences' (p. 434).

[292] Paul Friedrich, 'The Culture in Poetry and the Poetry in Culture', in *Culture/Contexture*, p. 43.

the society, and that other text which might have hidden its face if it were not for these voices heard publicly on stage.

As such, the playwrights' innovations, under the auspice of Dionysus' unlimited, yet welcomed-by-the-city freedom, initiate a multi-vocal display of subjects in tragedies which show a strikingly weak link to the actual events connected directly to Dionysus' myths[293] but at the same time, a very strong link with concepts in relation to religion and Dionysus, such as the concept of openness, otherness, unity, and ambiguity, even conflict. And although the relation of the tragedies to religion – since they are devoted to Dionysus – can be compared with that of the biblical plays of the Middle Ages in Europe, the multiplicity of subjects of tragedies can only to be contrasted with them, since the Medieval plays are strictly linked to events from the Bible: as Easterling writes, the plays were linked 'to fit a relevant point in the performance of an office, or in a procession, on a particular festival day'(p.46).

What happened in Athens might be compared with the theatrical stages of Europe of the seventeenth century where, as Boulton writes (p. 195), after the development of the cities, the theatre criticises the society before the time of the newspaper and the rise of the novel, and develops a 'kind of eight movement'[294] from society to theatre and back to society.

As for Athenian society, this combination of verbal and visual performance has a profound effect on the people, more than the other city rituals or social dramas. Therefore, after the demonstration of the connections between Dionysus and theatre, theatre and official ideology, theatre and personal expression, the discussion concentrates on the effect and popularity of the theatrical performance, and it will be

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[293] P. E. Easterling, in 'A Show for Dionysus', p. 46.
[294] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (Baltimore, MD: Paj Press, 1982), pp. 73-4.

argued that the theatrical performance can be characterised as the master expression of Athenian society.

d. The Impact of the Theatre

As a city ritual/drama, the theatrical performance is primarily judged by the state as another social practice for teaching the Athenians to be good citizens, and, therefore, the most immediate effect is the people's attendance which is considered to be a participation in public affairs. According to Cartledge, since most Athenians go only through primary schools, being in the theatre, as spectators, chorus members, or actors on stage, is another way for them to learn to become active participants in 'self-government by mass meeting' and as a way of learning how to debate with each other[295].

That participation, sharing obligations, displaying of unity, and learning through doing are, as argued, of much importance to the state is demonstrated by the fact that the citizens are, at times, actually paid to go either to Pnyx or to the theatrical performance – a state decision which shows the financial prosperity of Athens. At Pnyx, because of the fact that of the 60,000 Athenian male citizens in the fifth century, and 21,000 in the fourth, only 6,000 are participants in the Assembly, as

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[295] Paul Cartledge, 'Deep Plays', p. 19.

excavations and inscriptions show[296], around 400 BC, the authorities introduce payment for attendance to the Assembly and for serving as jurors. Similarly, probably under Pericles' regime, Athenians pay the non-prosperous to attend the theatre: anybody who has registered in a local deme can get the *theoricon*, as the ticket for attendance, so that, the non-prosperous can go to the performance, but they do not have to rely on wealthy citizens to do so[297].

Yet, specifically with the theatrical performance, the state is concerned about the performance as a whole, the plays' effect on the spectators, and the people's reactions to the plays: a meeting of the Assembly at the theatre of Dionysus takes place right after the show the purpose of which is the review of the overall[298] event of the competition. And although, as argued, the state is tolerant of what the imagination of the tragedians creates, it takes into consideration the reaction of the audience in order to determine whether a performance is successful or not. One particular case[299] demonstrates that the state made the playwright pay a fine for a much too devastating effect on the people: Phrynichus' tragedy *Capture of Miletus* – a city Athenians felt very close to – referred to the city's total destruction by the Persians, the subject of which caused the Athenians to literally weep at the end of the play, as if they were reliving the sad events of the catastrophe of Miletus. As a result, Phrynichus paid a

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[296] M. H. Hansen, 'How many Athenians attended the Ecclesia?', GRBS 17 (1979),pp. 115-134 (p. 115).

[297] Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 28.5, Aristoph.,*Birds,*793-96, Plutarch, *Pericles*, 9.

[298] The whole idea of judging a theatrical performance, as all sources show, is long and tedious, with a lot of regulations, but all the ones involved in a theatrical production – choregoi, tragedians, actors, dancers – worry about various factors which will affect the judges' fair opinion; for example, in Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen (Ecclesiazusae)* (1154-62), one of the characters asks the judges to vote for the play if they like his jokes, and the play's wisdom, and that they should not be affected by the fact that the play was presented first; and finally, that they should not behave like prostitutes who can remember only the last who paid them a visit.

[299] There are other cases of censorship applied, the most known, as is recorded in the *Acharnians,* is against Aristophanes who used his comedies to ridicule public personalities: in 370-82, Dikaiopolis takes the persona of the poet and he informs the public that he was persecuted for the last year's comedy, and in another line, he says that he will tell the truth to the people because comedy is always about the truth (496-519).

heavy fine (Herodotus,6.21) for reminding the Athenians of such an appalling event[300].

Another case which shows the profound effect of a play on an audience, and of an audience on a play – the 'eight movement' Turner refers to when he describes the connection between the two – involves Euripides' *Hippolytus*, and the event is considered a unique[301] instance in the Athenian theatre. The tragedian's play has two versions[302] because the first infuriated the audience: Phaedra, the character on stage, is openly in love with her stepson, and accuses him of assault, two acts the audience found totally immoral and full of indecencies (Zeitlin, p.219), apparently because they could not imagine themselves not only displaying these feelings, but doing so without justifying their actions; as a result, Euripides wrote a second version according to which Phaedra is, again, passionately in love, but does not declare her love publicly, and confronts the idea of love behind the scenes.

And perhaps, it is the theatre's powerful effect on and relationship to the audience which causes the same citizens – being spectators the one day and judges the next – to decide against Socrates in the matter of his condemnation, affected as they were by the caricature of him as drawn by Aristophanes in *Clouds*[303].

They are the same people who give birth through time to one actor on stage, then the second figure-actor, and finally the third – as the history of theatre unfolds in their city – and as they 'make possible relatively independent relations between named

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[300] Phrynicus' play was performed in 490, and the destruction of Miletus was in 494.

[301] Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, p. 219.

[302] In *The Context of Ancient Drama*, Eric Csapo and William J. Slater have collected, among other sources, a number of comments, referred to as *hypotheses*, which were attached to the ancient texts in medieval transcripts ; one of them (44, p.25) is about *Hippolytus*, and points out the fact that this version is written 'later', because the first contained 'improper' things; and that the second version was also called *Stephanites*.

[303] Richard Janko, 'Introduction', in *Aristotle: Poetics*, trans. with notes by Richard Janko (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), pp. ix-xxiv (p. x).

separate figures'[304], it is as if they make an effort to form themselves, to look beyond their face and the actor's mask and presence, to look beyond their grasp and knowledge, to another face or knowledge, *as if* they feel there is another face, another knowledge beyond the one they see. They focus on their actors' roles, and they are not simply Gorgias, Pericles, or Aristophanes. They become actors with masks like the ones on stage, and they probably reach a state of mind where fact and non-fact are single-dimensional, as in Euripides' *Bacchae*: Agave, possessed by Dionysus, holds what she imagines to be the head of a lion she has killed; what she holds, however, is the head of her son represented by the actor's mask. And right there, the spectators pity Agave for what she does because they might have reached a state of mind where pitying Agave, it is as real as pitying themselves – horrified as they are at the idea of her killing her son which might be as true as the idea of them causing the death of their own son. And right there, they experience some kind of a relief , not only knowing that they are not Agave, but, perhaps, realising that by seeing Agave, or by playing Agave, they might have the chance to avoid doing what Agave did: they might actually have the chance to learn about themselves by seeing her performing what they would not want to experience themselves. They learn by performing, or by being part of a performance, because, as actually said, it is through reflexivity that human beings learn about themselves: 'though, [...] we humans may divide ourselves between Us and Them, [...] we and they share substance, and [...] mirror each other pretty well'[305]. And the actors on stage teach the spectators something about their own selves without making them go through what the theatrical characters go through.

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[304] Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 151.

[305] Victor W. Turner, 'The Anthropology of Performance', in *The Anthropology of Performance* (Baltimore, MD: PAJ Press, 1987); as reprinted, pp. 1-36, www.cmq.edu.mx/documentos/diploadopier/anthropology%20of%20performance.doc., p. 11. [accessed Aug. 1, 2004]

From the range of emotions associated with tragedy, one might infer that the experience of the theatrical performance includes various levels of interaction, and consequently, the effect is as complex as every theatrical performance is because, as argued before, it, like the other rituals, brings together many separate things, fills people with self-reliance because they learn to take responsibility in front of others, and thus, the experience implies a degree of consciousness working on every aspect of those involved. Finally, every theatrical performance is also a spectacle: they all attend those acting their verbal and visual *ergon* that can only delight, since for the first time they can see, instead of simply hearing, the old stories performed on stage – as one of Euripides' characters says in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*:

> I have heard marvellous tales from story-tellers,
>
> but nothing to compare
>
> with this event which my own eyes have seen.(900-903)

A last note which supports the argument as to the intensity of tragedy's effect on people's lives, in relation to events completely irrelevant to theatre but related to their every day worries and experiences, comes from a story saved by Diodorus of Sicily, a Greek author of the first century BC, about an Athenian admiral of a sea-battle: the admiral dreamed that he and six other Athenian admirals were playing Euripides' *Phoenician Women* in a crowded theatre in which they had to face the enemy's leaders who were playing in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*. The role the admiral was playing was interpreted by him as a good sign for his winning the battle, as opposed to the one played by the enemy, and he concluded that the Athenians would win[306], which they did. The admiral, therefore, made the connection between his role on

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[306] Diodorus Siculus 13.97.6: according to Diodorus, the admiral is Thrasybulus, but according to most commentators, the story is about Thrasyllus, a general. Both were at the same battle, in Argynousai islands, during the Peloponnesian war, in 406.

stage, and his role in the battle, he contrasted it with the role of his enemy on stage, and he was ready to pronounce the good result of the battle based on the role of the tragedy he played in his dream.

Clearly, the theatrical performance seems to invade this admiral's life, as it invades the life of many others in the city. It invades and stays – as a man's dream, as Phrynichus' fine, as the second version of *Hippolytus* by Euripides, as the spectators' anger or tears, and as a theatre built under Parthenon to host the ritual of the city's rebel god, and to be filled by the voices, applause, and jokes of the crowd.

From all the above, one thing is clear about the theatrical performance: more than Panathinea, public funerals, or any other ritual or social drama, the theatre and tragedy – for what they are and from what may be inferred – maximise the possibility of it being characterised as the principal expression of Athenian culture.

e. Culture and Theatre

So far, it has mainly been argued that the theatrical performance is a civic ritual which, due to subjective interpretations of myths, is mostly a civic display of Athenian openness; that concepts originating from religion and transformed into city concepts, transform into theatrical concepts; and that the plays performed stimulate a variety of comments, reactions, and effects to all. And yet, are these inferences strong and decisive enough to call the theatrical performance – of tragedy primarily – the major focus of Athenian culture? They may be – particularly if one takes into consideration the popularity of tragedy, but mostly with what is defined as culture.

Indeed, theatre is central to the Athenians' lives – it is common, public, and ceremonial – and the concept of it may be seen as an expression and a synopsis of culture, of a 'concrete reality and a cloudy vision of perfection.'[307]

What theatrical spectacle is for those in Athens BC, even for those who do not think highly of tragedy[308], is probably an image the millennium citizen cannot grasp: the hours of watching the plays during daytime are long, and the movements of the actors are too slow. Yet, the evolution of thinking involved in the concept of theatre, combining rationality and naturalism in its ideas about human beings and society [309] is a notion everybody can grasp. And certainly the magnetic relations between the one story on stage and the common response in an audience, the uniqueness of the actor and the collective reaction of the audience[310] are notions everybody can grasp. As such, the concept and the experience of the theatre includes for the Athenians what Raymond Williams names as 'a whole way of life' within which a distinctive 'signifying system is seen'(p. 13), and he continues by indicating that culture is 'all forms of social activity [...] traditional arts and forms of intellectual production but also all the 'signifying practices' – [such as] language through the arts – which now constitute this complex and necessarily extended field.'[311]

This definition of culture is considered the most appropriate for the experience and concept of theatre because it covers the areas explored so far under the title 'Theatre of Athens': theatre is a distinct 'whole way of life' because of the multi level participation of people; it is also a distinctive 'signifying system' since the play

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[307] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p.24.
[308] Even though Socrates (and Plato) considered poetry less significant than philosophy as a source of values, it is known that he was attending, with his students, Euripides' tragedies.
[309] Leslie A. White, p. 67.
[310] Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture*, p. 152.
[311] p. 13. By 'this' Williams means 'culture', and he emphasises the fact that there is some practical convergence between the anthropological and sociological senses of culture as a distinct 'whole way of life'.

performed has its own meaningful significance and seen result on stage, and it is a 'system' put together by all for a particular moment in a particular system of celebration originated by the state. In that sense, theatre covers various 'forms of social activity' – such as the playwright's teaching of the actors, the paying of citizens to go and see it, or singing of the chorus; it is also an 'intellectual production' because it is based on the creativity of the playwright who turns to the 'traditional art' of poetry for inspiration. And finally, the 'language' is employed to create plays of a 'complex and necessarily extended field'.

Simultaneously, another reason for the choice of this definition is that it echoes the definition of ritual employed in the beginning of discussion of religious rituals. As such, 'the repetitive social practices' of the definition of rituals might be read as the 'social activities' in the definition of culture, the 'symbols in the form of dance or gestures' might be called 'traditional arts and forms of intellectual production', the sets of ideas or myths might be read as 'signifying practices such as language through arts', and the performance of rituals is the performance of a distinctive 'signifying system' constituting this 'complex and necessarily extended field' – the field of theatre.

An argument against the above notion of the theatre being an expression of the Athenian culture of the era might be that the theatre was an exclusively 'elitist preserve'[312], not for the masses but for the archons of the city – leaders and officials – and the foreigners. As already mentioned, the theatre is a city ritual for all citizens, but to refute the above argument, one has to take into consideration the number of people attending the plays, and as already done, if this number is compared with the body of citizens attending a regular Assembly meeting which is not more than a

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[312] Oliver Taplin, 'Spreading the Word Through Performance', in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 33-57 (p. 40).

quarter of the population of Athens, the conclusion is that the theatrical performance is definitely more popular[313] than an Assembly meeting. By any modern standard, the audience is large.

Another argument is expressed by J. R. Green when he comments on the fact that six Apulian[314] paintings with the same scene from Euripides' *Iphigenia Among the Taurians* were found, and 'none [...] shows any evidence of direct inspiration from stage performance, but simply the historical-mythical event'[315], insisting that the theatre was not a popular event which would inspire the crowd. His conclusion *is* quite wrong because Euripides' play *is* the event (Taplin, p. 40). Euripides *is* the reason for making it an event. The playwrights were turning the myths or the historical events into existing events, and the characters' appearance on stage is the great affirmation of tragedy over the epic.[316] The vase paintings are the undeniable evidence of the popularity of the tragedies and comedies, and the centrality of the theatrical experience in people's lives[317].

A further defence of the claim that the theatrical performance, due to its popularity and effect, is the major expression of Athenian culture, is the fact that it can be compared, as has been done by Ober and Strauss[318], with other example/forms of

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[313] Christian Meier, *The Political Art of Greek Tragedy*, trans. by Andrew Webber (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), p. 58.
[314] A colony in southern Italy.
[315] Green, J. R., *Theatre in Ancient Society*. (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 52.
[316] Rush Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre*, p. 46.
[317] There are about forty known examples of just one of the most popular scenes from Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (Taplin, p. 40), while 350 objects in the British Museum are inspired or related to the art of theatrical performance: vases, terracotta figurines and mosaics (Richard Green and Eric Handley, *Images of the Greek Theatre* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), p. 13,19)). And certainly Ruth Padel is correct when she hints that scenes, characters and costumed chorus men and women were the constant decorative items of the vase-makers who would – certainly – like to attract shoppers to buy them (Ruth Padel, *In and Out of the Mind* (Princeton, N J: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 4-5). The spread of Athenian tragedy and its popularity is also shown by the fact that vase paintings covering the whole spectrum of tragic scenes were found in Taras, a colony of the Laconians (Taplin, p. 43), not the Athenians.
[318] Josiah Ober and Barry Strauss, 'Drama, Political Rhetoric, and the Discourse of Athenian Democracy' in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?*, ed. by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.237-270 (p. 246.247).

cultural expression, such as with the Balinese cockfight as analysed by Clifford Geertz[319]. As they assert, both forms of culture are 'playful activities' – what Geertz calls 'deep play' – with a 'serious purpose': they are both in a arrangement to represent reality in a recognised and structured form by an audience who attend them to experience reality the way the game or tragedy presents and 'colours' it (Ober and Strauss, p.246-7).

The theatrical performance is Athenian culture's other name, since it is a form of popular culture springing out of concepts old and new, and totally Athenian. It springs from religion, from ideas associated with state politics, from the rhetoric used to express the questions raised constantly in Athens about politics or law suits, and from individual display – either in the form of a single orator at Pnyx, or the lawyer in the court, or the playwright who creates new stories out of the old.

The city and its people pack the theatre to attend what is already known, what is simply repeated on stage as an Athenian cultural innovation: they all see a segment of a long process of dramatic characters who, like those other performers of the Great Panathinea, parade eloquently in their primary role as the magnifying moments of the Athenian rituals. The characters are projections of the culture of the age, all part of a community compulsive enough to communicate through roles constantly changing, diversified enough to include playwrights as dramatic characters, in plays by other playwrights who assume the role of judges of the above playwrights. Eccentric? No, simply Aristophanean in his *Frogs*. There, Aristophanes, as a 'nexus or transfer point between the sponsor and the public'[320] transforms two tragedians into two competitors who are brought by Dionysus from the underworld to save the city.

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[319] see 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight', in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp.87 – 125.
[320] Oddone Longo, 'The Theatre of the Polis', in *Nothing to Do With Dionysos?*, pp. 12-19 (p. 13).

The brief employment of a comedy to epitomise this discussion on theatrical performance, and the argument for calling the culture of Athens a 'performance culture' takes place because the *Frogs*[321] is a text of the age meant to be performed and judged[322] – exactly as tragedy is. Besides, it comments on the tragedians and their art through the eyes of an insider, whose perception represents the gaze of the Other in a double role: of a playwright but not a tragedian, and yet one whose satire appeals to the people's need for laughter, even if it involves tragedy and its makers, but exactly because it involves a tragedy – such a familiar subject to all. In a way, the *Frogs*, through its content, forms a conjunction between all texts of the period, as opposed to those other texts of the period meant only to be staged.

Aristophanes' satiric approach presents Aeschylus and Euripides in an *ergon/agon* of their artistic talent, the reward for the winner being a meal at the Prytaneum[323]. The two dead poets become the significant Others – they and their tragedy – and part of the city life for the sake of the city. The living ones judge the dead ones in a ritualistic Athenian scene.

The importance of the contest is shown by the fact that it starts with an offering to the gods, and from the very beginning, and almost until the very end, it becomes clear that the result of the contest is quite ambiguous, and Aeschylus's victory is rather unexpected (Bowie, p. 249). Euripides is first[324] to point out Aeschylus' incomprehensible language and mute characters who simply try to keep the audience

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[321] The reference to this exquisite Aristophanean comedy will be brief because the intention is not to analyse the comedy as a text in all of its fascinating aspects, but as said above, to have an insider's – Aristophanes' – particular look at tragedy, to mention the main aspects of performance, and to be aware of an insider's satirical comparison between two tragedians – the subject of the next chapter, but not the tragedians of the next chapter.

[322] Jeffrey Henderson, 'The Demos and the Comic Competition', in *Nothing to Do With Dionysos?* ed. by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992),, pp. 272-313 (p. 286).

[323] the ceremonial headquarters of the state (Aristophanes, *Knights* 1409).

[324] As the competition progresses, both poets are characterised by Homeric, recognised similes, as the play specifies, relating to animals (814,823, 825), while each of them exchanges accusations against the other about literary tricks and theatrical misfortunes.

in suspense: 'The Chorus would grind out four strings of songs, one after another – but the characters would stay silent, [...] the spectator would sit guessing when Niobe would say something'(911-920). Later he brags about the democratic qualities of his tragedies because he lets slaves, men and women talk about the household affairs (950,952,959,975), while Dionysus bluntly undervalues Euripides' interest in domestic matters, calling them absurd (980).

The rivalry[325] goes on, with Persians, warriors and Phaedras (1022-1027, 1039) – at least as a reference – parading on stage, and with Dionysus praising either the wisdom of the one tragedian or the clarity of the other (1424-1434). But the ultimate test is the weighing; as Bowie remarks, it 'comes to mean, first the physical weight of the objects mentioned, then, 'grievous', and finally physical weight again, each change being designed to ensure that Euripides is always one step behind'(p.250). However, Dionysus still cannot make up his mind, and keeps on wondering about the choice of the best of the two. The final straw is drawn by the chorus of the Eleusinian Mysteries who pronounce Aeschylus the winner, and, at last, the *agon* is over.

The *Frogs* deals partially with the playwrights, only in their role as competitors in a parody of a contest, and only partially with their art. The two performers measure their value against each other's value – according to Aristophanes' perception of it – follow a code of action, and respect gods and the rules of the community. What they do not seem to have is a choice over the type of the *agon* they will have, but, then, they do not need to have a choice because they do not face any of the humans' conflicts any more. Their caricatures outline and faintly trace whom and what

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[325] With a continuing exchange between the two tragedians, and a definite ambiguous feeling about who the winner might be, the turn of lyrics comes next. According to each other's competitor's view, Euripides's wildly dithyrambic lines (1309) stand beside Aeschylus's repetitive and obscure ones (1264). And when Euripides targets Aeschylus's teaching in his tragedies, calling it useless – since Aeschylus's subjects in his tragedies are not as democratic as his own – Aeschylus refutes the argument rather superficially: 'Anyway, it's quite right that heroes should use grander words, because they wear more august clothing than we do'(1060).

Aristophanes considers indispensable subjects of the society[326], subjects easily recognizable by the audience, and whose dramatic art is as familiar to everybody as their names are. Homeric past, lyrics, words on top of other words, costumes, heroes and household affairs become part of a ritual on stage, and the means through which Aristophanes aims to make the audience laugh. And even if it is said that 'the impact of cultural interventions can never be neatly measured'[327], obviously, since his comedies make him a winner of theatrical contests, his choice of subjects turns out always to be more than accurate.

Finally, the satirical view of the Athenian tragedy exhibits a characteristic element of both, tragedy and comedy, which shows the importance of the role of a society, and the utmost connection between society and theatrical performance: the presence of a chorus and its catalytic contribution in the outcome of the *agon*. Even though Dionysus is the one who makes the two poets compete, the chorus turns the god's dilemma into a decision about the winner, assuming everybody's intention to respect the verdict; and everybody assumes that the verdict will be accepted – primarily by the god – because the chorus is *the* Chorus, present and active, just as the audience and god Dionysus are, just as the image of the city is.

Yes, the chorus of the Athenian tragedy is the chorus of people, the voice of *demos*, the mark of the city itself; and in that sense, the sentence 'the chorus will inevitably receive comparatively little attention [...] since it is not as a rule closely involved in the action and plot of tragedies'[328] seems surprisingly out of context. The assertion is definitely worth examining, but is it worth arguing with? Taplin's analysis of the Greek theatre does not include the performing self, but the question is, how can the

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[326] Henderson, Jeffrey, 'The Demos and the Comic Competition', p. 288..
[327] Jane Plastow, 'Introduction', *Theatre Matters*, ed. by Richard Boon and Jane Plastow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-10 (p. 2).
[328] Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, 6th ed., (London: Routledge, 1995), p.13.

analysis of the tragedy take place – and for that matter the analysis of the performing self – without an examination of the omni-present chorus? Doesn't the text of the tragedy include the chorus as part of the action? Doesn't the chorus advance the action, according to the text? If the chorus 'receives little attention' since it is not 'closely involved in the action', then, various details not involved in the action should 'receive little attention' by Taplin as well; but he has devoted a chapter to 'objects and tokens' – a chapter of more than twenty pages – but none to choruses. His line of thought does not follow Platonic doctrines as expressed in *The Laws* where the advocate of an ideal society admits the importance of the chorus, surveying, among other details, the way music and dance affect the body and soul (659;666;669). The chorus is equally weighty with the audience, resembling extended or close peripheries around the characters, circles of action around a focus which interacts constantly with them through the text and the performance on stage. Taplin's book concentrates on the visual action of the tragedy, with chapters such as that on exits-entrances being extremely valuable; however, his analysis does not comment on the ritualistic reality of Athenian society – a projection of which is the theatrical performance with the chorus.

As such, the chorus and all the others are there, and they focus their attention on the masked face and the face-like mask of two individuals in one, and they all experience this sense 'of otherness [which] is the sense of theatre'[329] in the open-meeting forum of the Athenians where imagination and communication created the concept of their city, the performance of dramatic characters on the theatrical stage, as well as their

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[329] Robert Edmond Jones, *The Dramatic Imagination* (London: Theatre Arts Books, 1969), p. 155.

performance culture. Or is it the other way around? What came first actually? The theatrical performance or the city performance? There is – isn't there? – something

> in the very nature of performance which implies no first time, no origin, but only recurrence and reproduction, whether improvised or ritualised, rehearsed or aleatoric, whether the performance is meant to give the impression of an unviolated naturalness or the dutiful and hieratic obedience to a code.[330]

The links between the Athenian city performance and the theatrical performance, as is argued above, seem to be definite, and, as will be argued in the next chapter, are the ones that connect the actor on stage with the character performed behind the mask.

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[330] Herbert Blau, 'Universals of Performance', in *Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, ed. by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 250-272 (p. 258).

Chapter Two

Athenian Self and Theatrical Character

One of the problems associated with conclusions drawn about the relationship of art and society, as indicated in the introduction, is casual and naïvely hypothesised connections between the two. To assert for example that tragedy was created in Athens because the Athenian political system was a democratic one is a monolithic way of perceiving a society and a society's expression of art, without at the same time taking into consideration other kinds of social parameters such as traditions, or family and religious values. At the same time, another problem derives from the fact that the city of the society and art under consideration is not an isolated nexus of values and attitudes, but exists within a wider range of cities which, similar to Athens, have created forms of art during the same era.

Among the various ways of dealing with the above problems, what has been adopted in this inquiry is the association of society and tragedy through a complex set of concepts derived from the connection of Athens with the religious values of the Hellenic world which, because of a combination of ideological, political, and economical factors, were transformed into Athenian concepts/values *in the way* they were displayed in the city's religious, social, and civic rituals. Thus, in connection also with the abundance of texts derived from Athens, conclusions are drawn about Athenian society and culture which differentiate Athens from other cities, and at the same time, although Athens shares similarities with cities such as Corinth or Thebes, it becomes a city/model which, more than other cities, invests in its culture, and uses it since it invents ways to display it variously.

Yet, regardless of the specific characteristics of Athenian culture, the line of argument goes beyond the association between society and tragedy, to the association between the individual in Athens and the staged character created by the Athenian tragedians, and as such, the links between individual and dramatic characters initiate certain new problems.

First, concerning the study of the individual, the existing sources deal primarily with the description of roles adopted by individuals, and with the Athenian ideology and way of life, rather than with the individual's *personal* dealings with, and various interpretations of – either the official ideology or the way of life; consequently, the individual performer of Athens, to a large extent, seems to be an unknown agent. As such, only fragmented pieces of information, people's statements, and individual actions suggest conclusions about the individuals' various perceptions of the society. And if this problem concerns the individual in Athens, obviously, a worse problem exists regarding the individual in Thebes or Argos where the information is far too limited to begin with. And, however restricted, a comparison between Athens and other cities is somewhat feasible, yet, the comparison between the individual in Athens and in other cities is not quite feasible. Third, in order for possible conclusions to be drawn about individual interpretations of society, and consequently of one's awareness of one's self as an individual member of the society, one has to rely on recent anthropological theories – detached as they are from the fifth century BC – which however connect the social nature of the self with the awareness of the self, and arrive at conclusions about human agency and performance – the focus of this inquiry.

Despite the problems described above, the connection between the individual of Athenian society and the staged character may be discussed on solid grounds since the

association of society and tragedy – therefore the association between individuals in the society and individuals on stage – through a complex set of concepts, has already been discussed, and since the texts derived from Athens describe an Athenian society and culture which differentiate Athens from other cities, and consequently, may differentiate the individuals of Athens from the individuals of other cities. Furthermore, as already implied, the recent anthropological theories, beyond any reasonable doubt, draw firm conclusions about human agency and performance. As such, the discussion and aim of the second chapter, which is the connection between the individual of Athenian society and the staged character of the theatre of Dionysus, goes as follows.

First, to continue the discussion begun in the first chapter about the individuals' participation in various rituals, and therefore, their collective roles, the differences between men's and women's roles as assigned by the state are examined next which leads to the discussion of classes or groups of people who adopt roles coming probably in conflict with those endorsed by the state, and therefore, their interpretation of roles or values demonstrate the individuals' awareness not only of their collective roles, but of their own self as an agent of a collective role.

Second, the above roles and conflicts introduce the sociocultural dimension of the self discussed next whose self-consciousness is perceived to be the outcome of objective activities and interactions with others; as argued, although the concepts of the performance culture constitute the concepts that may form a model of self – the Athenian performing self – the expression of these culturally embedded concepts vary considerably based on the ways individuals interpret their own roles in a complex, highly demanding society – an amalgam of traditional notions, and new, politically

derived ideas and challenges – creating thus, conflicting forces that individuals are often unable to control and work out for their own perceived advantage.

Finally, the chapter draws the lines of connection between the proposed model of the self and the dramatic characters by arguing that the characters, as personal expressions/projections of the tragedians, express/project the Athenian self: the tragedians, as individuals interacting in Athenian society, are members of that society, but also interpreters of the culture according to their own perceptions of both – just as the proposed performing self is a member of society and an interpreter of culture. Therefore, despite views that have been expressed defending the stereotypical nature of the dramatic characters, not only do they – the characters – express various interpretations of social concepts, but they expose, through the characters' actions, and the tragic outcome of most of these, the self's own conflicts, ambiguities, and the *agon* with one's own self.

I. The Collective Roles of the Individual

Indeed, as the discussion of various rituals has demonstrated so far, the Athenian citizens' participation in their city's society is more than just vigorous and multi-functional. When analysing the collective reality of Athens, Griffith[331] adds that the

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[331] Mark Griffith, 'Antigone and Her Sister(s)' As he continues, 'different age and gender groups were distinguished by their formations, songs, and dances,' and 'women's [...] men's choruses must not present themselves in the same ways, or they could not succeed in instituting their members into their proper social roles.'(p.119)

people, accustomed as they are to participating in various activities such as rituals, recognise and 'selectively adopt various conventional patterns of behaviour, [...] appropriate to this or that context and role, each with its distinct [...] semiotic code.' Additionally, they share the responsibility of the city, or they are proud of their city: besides being an imperial city, it is also a stable democracy[332] which keeps financially satisfied all classes[333]. The people's eagerness to participate in common things defines them as *polypragmones* who display their public image on various every day occasions, and 'the pursuit'[334] of honour is like the pursuit of victory in the games; the honour is

> the prize for a victory. Just as the details of an athletic victory [...] are irrelevant once the victory itself has been achieved, so the details of behaviour which led to honour being given are ir-relevant. [...] men are praised not because their giving corn will encourage others to give corn, but because their display of *philotimia* [...] will lead others to display *philotimia.*[335]

It follows that the individuals are not 'kinless, hearthless, lawless' (*Iliad* 9.63): they value and share (Aristotle, *Atheneon Politia* 1253a28-9) the ritualization of the Assembly or the courts, and the code of honour in their city where the system creates its culture as a 'process of ordering, [...] as a complex whole like a living organism which changes and develops'[336].

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[332] As Thucydides mentions (8.68) referring to the oligarchic coup of 411, the Athenian demos was used to its liberty, and it was hard for anybody to deprive it from them.
[333] Hornblower, *Thucydides*, p. 165.
[334] L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 1.
[335] Robin Osborne, 'Inscribing Performance', in *Performance, Culture and Athenian Democracy*, p. 356.
[336] Gerd Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; repr. 2000), p. 13.

Yet, although what is said about men is true of women as well, in contrast to men's definite roles, the women's roles seem rather problematic – since *polypragmones*, for example, is only a man's characterization. Therefore, a discussion of the political roles of men as opposed to those of women will clarify the roles, and will lead to the next step, the inclusion of groups and classes of Athenian society.

First, in the case of Athenian citizenship, on the one hand, men have the right to achieve it at the age of eighteen following customary procedures: every man must have been registered in an Attic village, his father's[337] hometown, and his name must have been listed in the *lexiarchicon*; he can participate in cults and in the popular assembly (*eclessia*), he can vote[338], serve in the army and as a juror, stand for election, and if elected, he should have his performance scrutinized and his financial dealings audited. He also has the right to protect his land and be protected by the law, as well as be buried by the state if he dies for his country (Manville, pp. 8-13). In full contrast to the above rights, women cannot participate in the assembly, cannot vote or be jurors, cannot be granted full citizenship unless indirectly through their relationship with a father, husband[339], or other relative, a *kyrios*, and then, a woman would have full protection under the law (ibid.).

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[337] In 451, Pericles limited Athenian citizenship to 'men born of two Athenians' (Plut., *Pericles*, 37.3). Aristotle's explanation is that there were 'too many citizens'; others refer to the preservation of racial purity, a stop to aristocratic marriage with foreign women or because Solon's laws were not written clearly and many disputes arose over inheritance (Alan L. Boegehold, 'Perikles Citizenship Law of 451/0 B. C.' in *Athenian Identity And Civic Ideology*, ed. by Alan L. Boegenhold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 57-65., p. 60).

[338] E. Ruschenbusch, 'Europe and Democracy', in *Ritual, Finance, Politics*, ed. by Robin Osborne and Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 189-200 (p. 191).

[339] When a woman gets married, further differences between men's and women's rights are demonstrated in the marriage contract, and in the household area, the *oikos* which includes, besides the married couple and their children, other dependent relatives, as well as slaves, and where relationships among members are 'hierarchic' (S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks*, p. 1), with men having legal control over all other members and material assets, even in terms of space: there is an explicit distinction between the men's quarters – where the *andron* (a room for reclining and drinking, a men's room) is – and the women's quarters and the slaves' rooms (Michael H. Jameson, 'Private Space and the Greek City', in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*, ed. by Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1990), pp.171-195 (p. 191)).

Furthermore, in the marriage[340] contract, the wife appears as a *kyria*, not as a *ktete gyne*, a possessed woman, and the marriage contract is not one of sale but of guardianship[341]. The husband guards and represents her in all legal acts, so much so that when women decide to be openly responsible and to complain in the court, their *kyrios*'[342] dominance is absolute[343]. And they are not allowed to govern the city, even though after Pericles' law of 451-450, for the sake of determining the citizenship of children, citizen women are distinguished from non-citizens[344]. Finally, laws which refer to marriages between foreign men and Athenian women, and foreign women with Athenian men demonstrate the degrees of privilege given to individuals in Athens, and the extent to which the division of groups/classes is a situation perceived as 'normal', traditional and accepted[345].

As such, one might say that three areas of achievement are open to Athenian women: marriage, the *oikos* management, and motherhood[346]. According to Attic orators such as Aeschines (I,171) though, certain widows can occupy the position of family head, and certain women are knowledgeable of legal affairs, while the women's contribution to the economy of the house is quite valid[347]; also, women do

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[340] Wedding ceremonies are the theme of many vase paintings. Along with human witnesses, the presence of gods indicates the belief that a wedding is a public act: Francois Lissarague, 'Figures of Women', in *A History of Women: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints,* ed. by Pauline Schmitt Pantel (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 139-229 (p. 150).

[341] Claudine Leduc, 'Marriage in Ancient Greece', in *History of Women: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints,* ed. by Pauline Schmitt Pantel, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 235-294 (p. 274).

[342] *Kyrios* means master.

[343] According to Plutarch, Alcibiades' wife, resenting his overindulgence in extra-marital affairs, brought the case to court, but he rushed in and dragged her back home through the streets, and no one dared to stop him (*Alc.*, 8.2-4).

[344] Elaine Fantham, et. al., *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.74.

[345] One such law specifies that 'if an alien shall live as husband with an Athenian woman in any way [...] he may be indicted before the *thesmotheae* by anyone who chooses to do so from among the Athenians having the right to bring charges. And if he be convicted, he shall be sold, himself and his property [...] The same principle shall hold also if an alien woman shall live as wife with an Athenian, and the Athenian who lives as husband [...]' (Dem. 16).

[346] J. W. Roberts, *City of Socrates*,(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p.25.

[347] Humphreys, p. 37.

come out of their *oikos* for matters of kinship, such as funerals, and are involved extensively in various rituals which ask women to display public roles.

Yet, one has to notice that, as Raaflaub writes, Athenian democracy affected the role of women more than in other cities[348] for three reasons. First, because of the men's intense participation, women were definitely 'marginalized' since they were excluded from the political and military decisions taken by men; second, since the city modified the rules related to burials which traditionally were associated with women, they were marginalized further; and third, in contrast to the above mentioned marginalization, the city recognised women as 'transmitters of legitimacy and property[349].

True enough, women's legal and political rights in Athenian society are limited, but on the other hand, their presence in religious and social rituals – the importance of which is already discussed – or on the stage of theatre (female characters) is more than simply prominent. And what officially appears as the state's position regarding women does not always reflect the way men perceive women, or women perceive themselves. Although various women's roles, and their perception of them, as well as men's perception of them will be discussed further in the section on tragedies, let it be added what an anthropologist has inferred after close analysis of a modern Greek

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[348] In her extensive study on women (in *Women In Ancient Greece*), Sue Blundell points out the fact that in Sparta and Gortyn – the only Greek cities that offer some details about women's roles – in contrast to Athens, women can be characterised as not so repressed. While in Athens the close connection between public and private interests presupposed an 'ideal' man's dominance in the *oikos*, and the woman's dominance is only a matter of 'speculation', in Sparta, the woman's dominance in the *oikos* was taken for granted, and she was the most decisive figure in the upbringing of her sons and daughters – at least until the age of seven for the boys (p.151). According to Xenophon (*Constitution*, 1.4) girls went through the same education and physical fitness as the boys, and in contrast to the women of Athens, according to Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 15.3). they were not much younger than their husbands. Finally, women in Sparta owned property – two fifths of the land, according to Aristotle (*Politics* 1270a). As for Gortyn, Blundell writes that in contrast to Athens where dowries were meant to be 'the medium through which a share in the paternal property was transmitted to a daughter', in that city, the dowry was not part of the marriage arrangement; the girl was only given the part of the inherited property she shared with her brothers and sisters (p.159).

[349] Kurt A. Raaflaub, 'The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth-Century' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*,pp.15-43, p.35.

village[350] and the contradictory roles of the two sexes which may reflect on the relationship between men and women in Athens :

> If […] we look beyond the appearance of prestige to the realities of power, we are led to a different perspective, […] men's public performances, rather being an indication of their power, may be a manifestation of their lack of power in […] the domestic realm […]. "Public" and "private" become not separate realms […] but aspects of both men's and women's roles.[351]

To return to the roles of both sexes, the city assumes new, collective roles for women as well, and, in the same way as the men, women reflect the culture of their democracy, and its performance; and just as their city displays its Athenianism, they all display their participation, sharing, and contribution to the city through their public – not strictly political – roles, exposed as they are to the gaze of others, and competing with each other in various ways.

However, although the Athenian population develops entirely new norms, at the same time, along with the new roles, there are old or other roles that exist in the form

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[350] The same view is held by Josine H. Blok (' Virtual Voices: Towards a Choreography of Women's Speech in Classical Athens' in *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, ed. by André Lardinois and Laura McClure(Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 95-116); after referring to modern rural Greece, and other Mediterranean countries, she concludes that the 'rules concerning the relations between men and women […] may accommodate contradictory forms of behaviour that might seem incongruent to an outsider, but that insiders explain as fully acceptable' (pp. 96,97). In the same spirit, Laura McClure ('Introduction' in *Making Silence Speak*, pp.3-16) claims that discourse analysis 'has revealed the ambiguities […] involved in interpreting stylistic elements of conversation.' And she concludes: 'for example, silence may express dominance and disapproval' (p.8) proving thus that women's silence may not necessarily mean submission, and behind-the-scenes life. Finally, Helene P. Foley (*Female Facts in Greek Tragedy*) expresses a similar view as following: 'Each sex performs for the *oikos* a different function […].Each sex also shares an interest in the *polis*, and performs different public functions […] that help to perpetuate the state, the male political […] functions, the female religious functions.'

[351] Dubisch, Jill, 'Gender, Kinship and Religion: Reconstructing the Anthropology of Greece', in: *Contested Identities*, ed. by Peter Loizos and Evthymios Papataxiarchis. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 44-46.

of groups and classes of people who do not contribute to the city's official image, either because they object to it, or because they are indifferent to it.

One such category of people are the *apragmones* who are not interested in public affairs or object to the city's politics – as the analysis of the various types of *apragmones* can demonstrate.

According to Thucydides, Pericles, in his funeral oration during the Peloponnesian war, draws the line of interdependence between public and private life by declaring: 'we alone regard the man who takes no part in such things – in public affairs – not as one who minds his own business, but also one who has no business here at all'(2.40.2). Pericles implicitly admits the existence of a whole class of Athenians who 'mind their own business', to be *apragmones,* because they do not participate in the assembly, or because they oppose the political system. His forceful remark, made more than once, opens itself to a variety of speculations about groups of citizens opposed to the politics of democracy, a short sample of which is examined below.

Upper class elitists can easily be Pericles' *apragmones*, especially the ones who had avoided generalship, a post held by them at their own expense. Usually they had to face the *demos's* suspicion in case of a failure of their duty, with six cases of generals being fined or exiled in a ten year period[352] because they were proclaimed to be guilty of profiting[353] from the city by 'extorting money from provincial cities'(Pritchett, p.30). Generalship, one of the relics of the past, was equivalent to spending money to buy weapons and hire sailors, especially during the fourth century, while in the fifth, the empire had the means to secure the generals' payment one way or another (p.35).

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[352] W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 114.(A general named Lamachus is the only known case of a general who is not wealthy).

[353] As Carter writes, there are indications that a rich general visiting a 'subject city would be well placed either to lend money at favourable rates of interest or invest in property.' (p. 36).

Besides the elitists, the political game includes the 'internationalists' who want good relations with Sparta[354], or those who are against war[355]; and most probably, Thucydides[356], a son of Melesias, leader of the opposition around 440 and 430 (according to Wade-Gery[357]) accused of the 'appropriation for the Athenians' private use of the surplus of the League funds'(Carter, p. 41), he being one of those politicians who were nostalgic for the old times when politics was not simply another name for imperialistic concerns (ibid.). To some extent, he is considered 'the first true party politician'(Ober, p. 89) if the word 'party'[358] is accepted as describing Athenian groups of politicians. He can also be considered an oligarch as opposed to Pericles[359], and his political career ended with his ostracism and his passing into exile[360], and true enough, he was not the only player conspiring against democracy. In fact, democratic leadership was interrupted in 411 and in 403 by two oligarchic[361]

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[354] W. Nestle, 'Apragmosyne' in *Philologus* 81:129-40 (1926). Nestle names the philosophers among the company of Protagoras and Hippias.

[355] V. Ehrensberg, 'Polypragmosyne: A Study in Greek Politics.' In *JHS* 67:46-67 (1947).

[356] Thucydides the historian doesn't mention him.

[357] Plutarch, *Pericles* 11, 14; (cf) H.T. Wade-Gery, 'Thucydides the Son of Melesias'. *JHS* 52:205-227 (1932).

[358] The parties are not entities as the modern ones but usually are identified as 'democrats', 'moderates' and digarches', having a tendency to merge into each other; it is perhaps accurate to say that the parties correspond to the 'rich', 'middle class' and 'poor'. Besides, the process of election as it is today did not exist then; many offices were filled by lot, and the rich had the same chances as any poor citizen to serve as a state officer. (Leonard Whibley, 'Political Parties in Athens during the Peloponnesian War', in *Cambridge Historical Essays* 1:38 (Cambridge, 1889)). About 'parties' in Arist. *Ath Pol* Ch. 28. In *Pericles II*, Plutarch places a division between citizens (*demos* – many) and those of more aristocratic convictions (*oligoi* – few) around the 440's. The term *demos* (democrats) and *oligoi* (oligarchs) became contrasting terms then.

[359] Although Pericles by birth belonged to the old elite, he has strong ties with the *demos*; he was elected general for 14 consecutive years, 443- 429. (Ober, p.86)

[360] W. Robert Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth Century Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 63.

[361] As Thucydides points out, in their effort to dominate the state rather then let the state dominate them, the oligarchs 'had no intention of being the first to be destroyed by the democracy when it was restored, but would rather call in the enemy'(8.91.3) therefore initiating an internal war which eventually brought the Spartans in. Besides Thucydides, other writers name certain individuals as opponents of democracy, one such writer being Aristophanes who names Critias, Phrynichus and Lysistrates (1.47) among those mutilating the Hermes before the expedition to Sicily. Whatever the reason or the case, ostracism was the next stage for an oligarch fighting against the vote of the majority or for any politician who was negatively received by the masses. Well-known is the case of Aristides who was asked to write his own name on the ostracon of an illiterate Athenian. Also, another interesting case is the 190 ostraca which were found under the Acropolis with the name of

coups – quite brief – one during the Peloponnesian War, and the other by the Spartans after the war (Ober, p. 18).

Pericles' *apragmones* may also encompass the class of farmers, who, since farming and fighting are apparently two activities most men in ancient Greece spend time doing[362], are more vulnerable to the difficulties of war and more in favour of peace than city dwellers (Carter, p. 97). For Lysias, a farmer 'has no choice but to be *sophron* (24.17), and Aristotle places the farmers (*Pol.,* 1289 b33) among the tradesmen and the craftsmen as the major components of *demos*[363]. Because they spend little time in the city, the farmers' attachment to their land goes together with their detachment from city affairs, but at the same time, this attachment to their land cannot simply be called emotional: when at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war the countrymen were specifically ordered to leave their property and move into the city, their regret was bitter and great (Thuc., 2.16) because they were abandoning the 'ancestral shrines[364] and their communities'[365].

The above amalgam of roles and classes of people, besides outlining the complexity of the Athenian society, indicates the diversity of individuals' actions and choices since they can adopt various roles depending on their perceived alternatives. As such, at this point, in order for the argument on the performing self to be completed, the discussion concentrates on the individual performers of the city spectrum who have to deal with various challenges and decide on the choices they make – sometimes

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Themistocles on them, all written by 14 instead of 190 different hands. Apparently these ostraca were operated by the members of an hetaireia (Connor, p. 25).

[362] Lin Foxhall, 'Farming and Fighting in Ancient Greece', in *War and Society in the Greek World*, ed . by John Rich and Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 134-143 (p. 134).

[363] although he modifies the opinion slightly when he makes the point: 'The rural *demos* is best [...] for, since they do not own much property, they have little time for leisure, and hence do not often meet in the assembly' (*Pol.* 1318 b10).

[364] When Aischines makes a sharp point about Athenians' family tombs, shrines, legal marriages, children and relatives in Attica, he appeals to household-related microcosms traditionally conceivable by all in the audience, Athenians and countrymen alike (2.23).

[365] Jameson, 'Private Space and the Greek City', p. 175.

beyond their control – and argues that the individual self's awareness of others, through actions and challenges, makes one aware of one's own self. Additionally, since the individual belongs to a specific era, city, and culture – the performance culture – which affect the roles, actions, expressions of an individual, the self will be called the performing self of the Athenian society.

II. The Performing Self

The main line of the argument applied to the individual agent in Athens begins with the claim that the making of an emergent city and the genesis of the social nature of the self are parts of an analogous process since they are related in a dialectic interdependence. While the systems of production and communication of a city progressively develop, the individuals' instincts and needs may be brought 'more into the scope of social organization and conscious reflection', and a state of 'self-conscious individuality'[366] emerges as the outcome of objective activities and human relations, as a continual interchange between one individual and the public and private expressions of the city group (Burkett, ibid.). The being and the becoming of the two find a unity in the form of every social action, as initiative of one or as a result of

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[366]Ian Burkett, *Social Selves* (London: Sage, 1991). p. 190.

another. More specifically, every city action as an objective one works as a stimulus, forcing the individual to respond and to reflect on the possible meanings and effects of the action that the individual can respond with to the original stimulus. At this moment, the individual is forced to take into consideration the attitude of the others in order to see how the act of the individual will be interpreted by the others, and how the act will reflect on the one who initiates it. If it weren't for the other members of the city, the individual would not be able to interpret the action and respond to the stimulus of the action (Burkett, p. 34-35). According to Mead,

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but [...] from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group. For he enters his own experience as a self, [...] not by becoming a subject to himself, but only so far as he becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience[367].

The self, being in the 'centre of origin of all experience', is the agent[368] who reflects and acts, as if the 'I' self's image comes back as the 'me' self image 'by taking the attitudes of others towards himself within a social environment in which both he and they are involved' (Mead, p. 138). Or, to describe the above process differently, it is as if the 'I' sound will return as a 'non-I' echo, lost in place without the other's presence or voice in return. And the 'I-am-because-you-make-me-be' can be read as: 'I did not know that I am before my teacher came to me. I lived in a world that was no world. I cannot hope to describe adequately that unconscious yet

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[367] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behavioralist.* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1934), p. 134.

[368] As is actually said about the individual as an agent, 'My existence in general is my being an agent because I do in the centre of origin of all my experience' (John MacMurray, *The Self as Agent.* London: Faber and Faber, 1953, p. 106).

conscious time of nothingness'[369]: Helen Keller's world of nothingness is the world of no words, no other, no image of self[370].

Keller's voice might express individuals' voices which estimate the self's presence through the presence or the absence of the Other, *just* as every culture and society determines and justifies its presence against the presence or absence of the significant Other's society whose identity may be diminished or projected in accordance with or for the sake of the significance of the society/culture. Similarly, *just* as the city expresses its presence through its regulated performances, the rituals, the individual, as a member of the system, adopts patterns of behaviour which determine the interaction of the self with the other, and the self's presence in accordance with the other.

As it stands, the individual's 'private acts' are inferred to be 'modelled on collective performances', the rituals, because public performances are social practices expressed as implicit symbols, or gestures, and recognised by others who act them out – are 'action-promoting acts [...] mental acts'(Harre, ibid.) which through interaction become 'privatised appropriations'(ibid.); and the self exists in this duality of mental and collective 'ambiance' as the 'I' who commands, or wishes to do a private act, and the 'I' who acts it out (ibid.). Thus, at one point, the individual is an actor 'acting out in a role he has been ascribed by the society' one is part of; [...] and in 'other instances he is a spectator;'[371]

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[369] In Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), p. 227.

[370] Ron Harre is one of the very few writers who make connections between the person as 'an empirical concept as a being in a collective realm and the self as a concept acquired by the individual during the processes of social interaction'. And he does bridge the two by attempting to show that the 'unities of consciousness and agency that constitute a sense of personal identity are acquired as a result of learning theories of personhood.' He is influenced by Kant, Mead and Vygotsky. (*Personal Being.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 22,26.)

[371] Colin Turnbull, 'Liminality: a Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience' in *By Means of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 50-81 (pp. 75-76).

The self, accordingly, seems to be eager to be triggered by an environment of the present or of the past, of situations at hand or imaginative, and emotions 'even if these emotions are a lie'[372]; [...] we also use the sense of as if this were true in the course of trying to feel what we sense we ought to feel or want to feel'.[373] Discussing further the subject of everyday interactions, Goffman concludes that they are not

> put on in the sense that the individual knows in advance just what one is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have. The expressions it is felt one is giving off will be inaccessible to him [sic]. [...].But [...] the capacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of eyes and body does not mean that one will not express oneself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions. In short, we all act better than we know how.[374]

Indeed, human beings act profoundly well. They use gestures, signs and words, in a dialogical interaction with the Other, or with themselves in the roles of the actor and the spectator simultaneously, in public mostly where 'social reality and social activity'(ibid., p.61) are formed, where their actions show the effects of the sociocultural aspects in their behaviour.

The above discussed argument, which holds that a state of self-conscious individuality emerges as the outcome of objective activities and human relations, and

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[372] ibid., p. 41. As the writer explained, 'The human system is an extremely subtle multiplex-feedback, one in which the originator of feelings is also affected by the emotions s/he is expressing [...]. That is what Ekman's (Paul Ekman, *Emotion in the Human Face* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1972) experiment, and good acting are saying: the doing of the action of a feeling is enough to arouse the feeling both in the doer and in the receiver. The so-called surface of emotion – the look on the face, the tone of the skin [...] is also the emotion's depth', p. 41-41.

[373] Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 43. She actually refers originally to the 'deep acting' – 'acting done by a person with a trained imagination' – and shows how it is used in everyday situations.

[374] Irving Goffman,. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), p. 73-74.

that the individual's private acts are affected by patterns of behaviour to be found in one's own culture, can be demonstrated by the presentation of the individual in the very nucleus of the city itself, the agora. It is the place where the apotheosis of the crowd transforms into the apotheosis of the individual, where the cultural concepts of display, of communication, participation, sharing, and competition transform into concepts related to the presentation of the self in the city, and, therefore, into the primary components of the performing self, or, of the self's performance in the city which now takes place individually, for one's self, modelled after the collective performance of the city[375].

The agora seems to be the Athenians' every day, social, common reality of belonging to the city, and the greater one's participation in that social reality, the greater might be 'one's sense of self' (Carter, p. 1). In a way, 'one's sense of self' emerging out of each individual's participation in the agora occurs the moment the crowd – of the agora – gives place to the crowd of the individual, or actually to the agora of the individual: of Socrates, Aeschines, Alcibiades or Sophocles. And for a moment, it seems as if they wander ceremoniously in their agora, just as they identically parade eloquently in the frieze of the Great Panathinea on the Parthenon – in their primary role of magnifying moments of the Athenian reality of rituals. The

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[375] Actually, the connection between the agora and the individual is expressed at its best by the term 'ritualization' to refer to the way of social acting 'designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian activities' (Felicia Hughes-Freeland, 'Introduction', in *Ritual, Performance, Media*, ed. by Felicia Hughes-Freeman (ASA Monograph 35), (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-11 (p. 1). Consequently, ritualization may embrace performance as well in terms of situated and performed practices, and not just as the 'replication of a given script of text' (Simon Coleman and J. Elsner, 'Performing Pilgrimage: Walshingham and the Ritual Construction of Irony', in *Ritual, Perfomance, Media,* pp. 46-65 (p. 48). In this approach then, 'ritualization' may easily touch on matters of agency, creativity along with constraint, aspects of participation rather than forms, and methods people use to construct reality or to perceive reality the way they choose to perceive it (Felicia Hughes-Freeman and Mary M. Crain, *Recasting Ritual* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), p. 1). According to the editors in the introduction to the latter volume, this approach is needed by the 'empirical circumstances of contemporary social interaction, in which, beyond the spatial boundaries of a community, ethnic or national minorities as well as diasporic societies utilize their own performances as arenas in which they affirm their own identities, while also speaking to outsiders.'

'visual narrative'[376] of the frieze captures the eye of the spectator in a chosen moment of them all – of musicians, chariots, 'displayed as conceptual images and pointers to an understanding of the whole'(Lagerlof, p.69). Yet, their instant from the slow, long pace of narrative order, suddenly, pauses, and a 'figure breaks abruptly [...] out of the static group pattern'(ibid.), as one of Malraux's 'voices of silence': it is the actor in the ritual scene of the Panathinea, of the Eleusinian mysteries, of Pnyx, of the courts and of the Agora. It is the subject-participant emerging from the object-whole. It is the one within the city of the many.

As such, the individuals wander in the ritualised setting of the agora in order to see and be seen, to compete at dressing up as the orators compete with words and verses, to judge the other's commercial products as the spectators judge the orator's techniques, to show their charity in order to be known for their charity, to display their friends in order to be known for their friends, to display, in other words, their own personal *ergon,* and to become the performers of their own acts just as they are the performers of the religious or city rituals.

The following are some examples of the agora scene, and the concepts of display related to it:

Aeschines, according to Demosthenes, 'struts' around the agora in long strides dressed in a cloak reaching to his ankles and with his cheeks blown out (Demosth. 19.314).

Midias swaggers about the agora with three or four cronies, describing his cups and rhytons and libation bowls in a voice loud enough for the passerby to hear''[377]

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[376] Margaretha Rosshdun Lagerlof, *The Sculptures of the Parthenon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 69.

[377] Demosth. 21.158. According to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1390b32 – 1391a19) wealth goes with arrogance and hubris – violent insult. He further states (*Rhet.* 1378b28-29) that rich men commit hubris to show their superiority. The poorer citizens are envious of the wealthy ones and they, according to Lysias (24.16) are not guilty of hubris.

An amateur painter scratches a portrait on a wall, a Scythian slave dedicates a graffito to Hermes, while the praise of a handsome boy signs the presence of the boy's admirer.[378]

Of Cimon the Athenian, it is said that,

> he always took around with him two or three youths who had some small change and ordered them to make a contribution whenever someone approached him and asked him […] whenever he saw one of the citizens ill-clothed, he would order one of the youths who accompanied him to change clothes with him. For all these things he won his reputation and was first of the citizens[379].

Plato's *Menexenus* starts with bystanders gathered to hear what the Council is deciding, and they are probably the same ones with those described in the following excerpt:

> both aliens and citizens; they will scan each one as he appears, and detect by the looks those who have voted for acquittal. What will you have to say for yourselves, Athenians, if you emerge [from the court room] after betraying the laws? With what expression and with what looks will you return their gaze? (Demosth. 25.98)

Stephanus in *Against Stephanus I*

> has reviewed the matter and reached the conclusion in his mind, that those who walk in a simple and natural

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[378] American School of Classical Studies at Athens, *Excavations of the Athenian Agora Picture Books 1 - 14* (Princeton, New Jersey: Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, 1967-1974).
[379] Theopompus 30-37 in *FGrH* 115 F 87.

way and wear a cheerful countenance, men draw near unhesitatingly with requests and proposals, whereas they shrink from drawing near in the first place to affected and sullen characters. This demeanour then, is nothing but a cover for his real character, and he shows the wildness of his disposition (Demosth 46).

The above fragmentary moments of a selection of individuals in public scenes endeavours to emphasise the concepts of the performance culture as they are transformed into concepts related to individual interaction in the city setting where the gaze of the others, and the opinions of others are experienced on a routine basis by the individual. A kind of ritual takes place, a visual action, a back and forth *agon* of exchange – of the woman who sells ribbons, of the slave in his public praying to Hermes, of the citizen who writes his name on the list of judges at the theatrical performance.

Indeed, individuals are influenced by their social environment, but, as Nigel Rapport has defended eloquently, 'not in any simple [...] way; they learn to express themselves in terms of customary practices and symbolic forms [...], but not so as to be denied of the possibility or need continually to make their sense.[...]. Interpretation [...] occurs in individual minds'[380]. And what might be called 'performing self' therefore, may be taken, as Schwartz writes, 'as the individual's version and portion' of one's culture; but, as he continues:

> A given personality [...] is not necessarily representative in a statistical sense, nor is the approximation to some central tendency the aspect of culture stressed by a distributive model. Rather, this

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[380] Nigel Rapport, 'Celebrating and Advocating the Personalisation of the World: A Reply to Don Gardner', *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11:2 (Aug. 2000), in *EBSCO Research Databases* http://web10.epnet.com [accessed 30 April 2004] (para. 21 of 35).

model emphasizes the whole array of personalities, the constructs they bring to and derive from events […]. Although individual personalities […] are the constituents of culture, they may be discrepant and conflicted among themselves.[…] Similarly the constructs of the individual will vary in the adequacy with which individuals anticipate and conduct the course of events[381].

An argument on the formation of a model of self coming out of performance culture should take into consideration, besides one's own agency, and the cultural concepts discussed above, factors and forces which affect the city and the self expression of performance; as a result, the self should not be formulated with only a strict 'statistical form' in mind, and within the strict constituents of one's culture; and the final assertion on the model self should be formed with the consequences of these factors in mind.

Factors interfering[382] and affecting one's own actions in Athens during this time, besides the variability of individual expectations and intentions, are the ones in connection with forces, conflicts, and anxieties existing in a society during a period of transition having to do with the fact that Athens is an empire, and the Athenians, for

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[381] Theodore Schwartz, 'Where is the Culture? Personality as the Distributive Locus of Culture', in *The Making of Psychological Anthropology*, ed. by George Spindler (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 429-441 (p. 432).

[382] One important point is made here by Rapport who takes into consideration what he calls 'democratic violence' described as 'normal' in a social setting: individuals variously perceive a given situation in a democratic society, and these variable meanings are likely to 'violate one another's expectations of orderly and ethical worlds'; but, as he continues, violations occur 'under the aegis of behavioural forms which each can accept and expect; however, the 'violence' remains beneath the surface'(ibid.), individuals accept it, but not without being affected by it; and their interpretation of interactions and events in the city are affected by it as well.

The violence discussed above might be that imposed by the city on the individual when he is asked to go to war – a constant demand imposed on individuals in Greek cities. Men accept their duty, but at the same time, their own feelings towards their beloved ones who are left behind are violated by the city's demands. As Lysias says in one of his Funeral Orations, the Athenian rowers at the battle of Salamis were asked to fight bravely, and they did so, regardless of their feelings for the loved ones they had left behind, and regardless of the fear in connection to what would happen to those same wives and children in the case that they, the rowers, would not succeed in their mission ('II Funeral Oration For the Men Who Supported the Corinthians', in *Lysias*, trans. by W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 244 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1930; repr. 1967), pp. 28-70 (p. 49)).

the first time, are dealing with unfamiliar, 'rapid and pervasive'[383] changes. As Raaflaub clarifies, 'for the first time a large proportion of the population lived in [...] urban conditions and the nonagrarian sector assumed an essential role in a Greek community's economy [...]. Also [...] for the first time, [a city] developed an almost completely monetized economy'[384].

Additionally, the period under consideration encompasses the years between the Persian wars and the Peloponnesian War – two diametrically different conflicts which dramatically affect the people of Athens – perhaps more than in other cities – the first one positively, and the other negatively. And the performing self of the individual under consideration cannot but be affected by the social and historical circumstances affecting the lives of individuals, and therefore, the awareness of one's self.

At this point then, let it be said that after the Persian Wars, the Marathon victory specifically, Athens and other cities, affected by the optimistic spirit which accompanies successful wars against powerful opponents, started expressing their political identity through permanent monuments associated with their polemical victories. Among the various cities, Athens was first to display its plethora of monuments in three – not in one as the other cities did – prominent places, in the agora, the cemetery of *Ceramicos*, and on the Acropolis[385]. At the same time, Athens, not only as a leader of the other cities in the war against the Persians, but as the head city of the Delian League displayed monuments of its superiority in various places such as Delphi, while in general, the success of the Athenian empire is moulded in vases and statues – the most characteristic of all are the statues of Victory which can

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[383] Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub (in 'Reflections and Conclusions: Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, pp.319-344), p. 341.

[384] Kurt A. Raaflaub 'The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth Century' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, pp. 15-41 (p.25, p.41).

[385] Tonio Hölscher, 'Images and Political Identity: The Case of Athens' in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, pp.153-183, p. 156, 158, 168.

be seen as exposing 'the effusive atmosphere and the enthusiastic optimism that so often dominated politics in Athens'(ibid., p. 176) since their successful military leadership among Greeks brought prosperity in the city, the centre of Greece.

At this time also, the effect of the Persian Wars is obvious not only on monuments of city identities, but on the artistic expressions of individuals, such as in painting or in written form – displaying thus the confidence and need of people for self expression and self identity, and for dealing with the challenges around them. In Athens, the centre of arts for the Greek world, the theme of the war, for example – one of the most dominant themes during this period – is treated differently depending on the artist and the art involved. Aeschylus, the historically first tragedian among the three Athenian ones, in *Persians,* comments on the moral values of the war between the Greeks and the Persians; on the other hand, the painting on the agora walls praises Athenian bravery; but vase painters find various ways to show the ugliness of the war between the Greeks and the Persians: some of them portray acts of sexual abuse between Greek and Persian warriors – criticising thus the warriors, and exposing other perceptions of the war, not only the valiant ones (ibid., p.178).

The period after the Persian Wars, in general, is characterised by military success, confidence, and need for collective as well as personal expression – in Athens more than in other cities – but the coming of another war, the Peloponnesian one, this time mainly for Athens, signifies another period, away from euphoria and confidence. This new major war originates a period of doubt, defeat, and tragedy for the city.

The Peloponnesian war[386] underlines the continuing polemic events Athenians have to face either as warriors, or families of warriors, or even as orphans of heroes, and its

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[386] The Peloponnesian War lasted from 431 to 404 BC . Pericles died in 429.

length and result do not identify it as a war analogous to that of the Marathon[387] one, which created such haughty buildings and the confident minds of competitive, written values. *This* is a war of defeat and of misery, in a city which, for all of its laws and politics cannot and does not help the people face defeat and death.

During the twenty-seven years of the war, besides the final defeat by the Spartans, and the casualties, the Athenians, according to Thucydides, had to deal with the plague (2.57), with the evacuation of the countryside by the farmers (2.16.2), and with the blaming of everyone but themselves (8.1) for the defeat, especially in connection with the expedition to Sicily, during which the Athenians, under the false guidance of Alcibiades, experience what Thucydides describes as such: 'no Hellenic army had ever suffered such a reverse'(7.75); he thus refers to the difference between the greatness of the army and the ships sailing off to Sicily, and the heavy loss of the end. As a result of such events, the Athenians face starvation[388], a considerable population drop[389], and spiritual dependence on various cults and gods, foreign or local. According to Hornblower, the plague was responsible for the popularity of the healing god Asclepius during this time (ibid., p.178), and even the rationalist Pericles, according to Thucydides (3.82.1), states concerning the plague that it is 'heaven-sent'[390].

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[387] The Persian Wars ended around 449 BC, with the battle of Marathon (490), along with the sea battle of Salamis (480), being the two victorious battles of the Athenians towards the Persians.

[388] Simon Hornblower, *The Greek World 479-323BC* (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 151.

[389] Hornblower compares the number of 25,000 hoplites reported by Thucydides (2.13), with the number of 9,000 hoplites given by Lysias (20.13) at a later date, and justifiably concludes about the population drop (ibid., p. 171).

[390] Another consequence of the war is examined by Barry Strauss in an absorbing study of the relations between fathers and sons during the Peloponnesian war: he blames the 'brutality and the upheavals' of the war for the arrogance and the boldness of the 'generation of the 420s', as he calls the youngsters who made their old people totally impatient with their behaviour (Barry S. Strauss, *Fathers and Sons in Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 5) especially with the notorious Alcibiades whose arrogance and demagoguism make him a representative of the young generation. The behaviour of these youngsters is also blamed on the sophists, whose teaching, during this time, made them turn their back on the old, widening thus the gap between the two generations (ibid.). According to Xenophon (*Mem.* 1.2. 49) Socrates was accused for exactly this: for making the youth disobey their fathers, and for following him.

This war does not affect the overall politics of the Athenian democracy, yet because of its devastating consequences, it is one of the major factors which shape people's perceptions of their interactions; through the various conflicts individuals have to face perceived in a rather pessimistic way; people feel defeated, insecure, even cynical, ready to raise questions and dilemmas, ready to hear the sophists, the gods, and Alcibiades.

The historical events described above, as well as what has been argued so far in relation with the social awareness of the self, make apparent the notion that the formation of a model of the performing self is connected, first, with the characteristics of an agent – social consciousness and interpretation of one's actions – as well as with factors having to do with one's culture and era. In the case of the Athenians, the elements of the performance culture on the one hand, as well as the tensions and conflicts resulting from the demands of the imperialistic position of the city, and on the other hand, the time between two very dramatic wars for the Greeks, but especially for the Athenians whose city identity was highly affected by them – by the optimistic attitude accompanying the first and the pessimistic feelings accompanying the second, the formation of a model self is framed as following.

First, the self arising from Athenian culture, is a performing self, certainly not in the sense that 'a circus animal may be a performing animal' for the sake of others, as Victor Turner recognises[391], but in the sense that one is 'self-performing'(ibid.); one may attain a consciousness of self by participating in various roles, and in complex contexts of the city performance. One self's performance is reflexive taking into consideration the assertion that human beings share more similarities than differences, and that the One reflects the Other instead of being detached from the Other; in

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[391] Victor Turner, 'The Anthropology of Performance', in *The Anthropology of Performance*, p. 8.

Turner's words, human beings 'share substance, and ego and alter mirror each other pretty well – alter alters ego not too much but tells ego what both are!'(ibid.)

Apart from this basic notion of the self, each person's actions are likely to follow a pattern of events: stimulus-challenge, confrontation, outcome and consequences[392]. The individuals' actions depend on the relationship to the concept of other in the city – one of the basic concepts of Athenian ideology and politics at the individual and collective level. The Other of the performing self might be the other person, the gods, the presence of the dead, or even that of one's own self, *depending on each person's version of the Other.*. Consequently, ambiguous challenges come forward in relation to whom or what the one competes with or comes into conflict with. In both cases, the individual, performing and living in a city which transforms displaying into an art and a weapon, displays one's own public *ergon/agon,* visual or verbal, depending again on each person's perception of *ergon*, a display of a person's tasks which might determine whether one succeeds in the city spectrum and for one's own benefit. As such, many times, the individual must simultaneously perform diverse *erga/agones*, the conflicts are exceedingly complex, and the person not adequately effective in dealing with them. But the individuals remain involved, facing dilemmas and ambiguities, performing an *ergon* they assume they fully retain control of, and imagining that the outcome cannot be otherwise then successful for them. The choice of the social individual to confront conflicting forces, to control, or to imagine he/she can control a situation, and to display a performance in relation to the concept of the other – in accord with a person's ambiguous choices which lead to ambiguous, and

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[392] S. C. Humphreys, *The Family, Women and Death: Comparative Studies* (London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 19.

most commonly fatal outcomes for that person's fate – *this* describes the model of the Athenian performing self.

It is a model related to this age of the city's history, a period of an abundance of self expression which, more than anything else, confirms and verifies the existence of a performing self who chooses, creates, and interprets one's own self expression through one's choice of politics, of roles, of statues to be made, of paintings, drawings, words, and of writing – to mention some. And as such, to the question as to what extent can the above model be perceived as an inclusive entity with the complexities and inconsistencies of an individual self, the answer is that this model can be perceived as an entity in the expressions/creations of artists, in the works of those who write stories about characters to be performed on stage of the Dionysian theatre where the audience go to get involved, to applaud, ridicule, condemn, or follow in awe the tragic story of those on stage who act, fight, choose, hope, persist, suffer, or just perform – just like them.

Indeed, because of writing as a form of expressing the culture and the interpretation of the era, this model of self is argued to be found in the area of theatre – since theatre epitomises Athenian culture, and since the play is a text of popular culture; and what theatre is for the culture, the dramatic character of theatre would be for the model of the performing self.

However, the above reply seems only partially inferred as such, unless firm lines of connection are determined by perceiving the tragedians *as selves/agents* in Athens, who interpret the culture and the era, and *transform* concepts into elements formulating the self of characters. They actualise on stage what is the outcome of objective activities and interaction with others. And the analysis of their characters, in turn, might demonstrate the firm connections between the self and the character.

Simultaneously, the discussion of the same cultural concepts to be found in both, the performing self and the character, and the comparison underlining each tragedian's analysis of the characters clarifies, besides the subjectivity of each tragedian's interpretation of the culture, the dramatic characters' performing self.

Therefore, first, the discussion focuses on Sophocles and Euripides – the similarities between them in their roles as tragedians, and their differences in the way they interpret the society as selves/agents – and then, the discussion focuses on the dramatic characters.

III. Sophocles' and Euripides' Similarities and Differences: Agents and Creations

Chronologically, Sophocles and Euripides are close to each other, with a ten-year difference between the first contest of Sophocles (442 BC) and that of Euripides (455 BC), and with almost the same date of death (406 or 405) slightly after the end of the Peloponnesian war. Both are involved in a new form of writing which is welcomed by the state, and as Henderson[393] asserts, they are the 'elite competitors in a democratically organised contest , but unlike purely civic speakers, [...] they could appeal to older poetic traditions, and to a more universal ethical code.' And as such,

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[393] Jeffrey Henderson, 'Attic Comedy, Frank Speech, and Democracy', p.268.

they do not deal with 'civic categories' of individuals, but with 'the very discontinuity between the political and the larger society'[394]. Characteristic, as also mentioned, is the fact that both tragedians expose on stage the ambiguous ways women occupy in Athenian society, which, according to Blundell[395], shows the 'general anxiety' about the 'anomalous position' of women the tragedians 'felt able to project' – indicating thus their awareness of the problems of the individual.

As tragedians whose stories are performed – 'complex ceremonies in miniature' in Tedlock's words[396], creations like 'phantoms formed in the human brain [...], sublimates of their material life process' in Marx's words[397] – they both display their *ergon*, and expose the 'human tragedy'(ibid) in an inconsistent 'Dionysian behaviour'[398] of reversals and ambiguities, and therefore, the analytical discussion on the treatment of individual characters starts with what the two share in the treatment of characters.

Specifically, the analysis of each text[399] in search of the character reveals the social patterns of the relationships of the individual, conflicts and actions, and consequently, it transforms to the analysis of the social dynamics behind each play's perception of the actions/conflicts of the character. Each play is an arena of conflicting ideas which underline the interaction of each character with the others *as well as* conflicting ideas/feelings *within* a character.

And although one might agree with Aristotle when he draws attention to the action of the play rather than to the character by announcing that the character yields to the action rather than the action to the character (*Poetics*, 49b24, 50a23-25), the moment

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[394] ibid., p.269.
[395] *Women in Ancient Greece*, p.180.
[396] Dennis Tedlock, *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*, p. 34.
[397] 'The German Ideology', p.632)
[398] Mark Ringer, *Electra and the Empty Urn: Metatheater and Role Playing in Sophocles* (Chapel Hill, N C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 183.
[399] The analysis of the text means the analysis of dialogues, scenes, other characters, and use of words.

each character, or a character like Orestes wonders in agony and asks his friend: 'Pylades, what shall I do?' (Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers (Choephore)*, 899), and Pelasgus cries: 'I do not know what to do; my heart is gripped with anguish: shall I take action or not?' (*Suppliant Maidens*, 379-380), at that moment, characters may come into apocalyptic realisations about themselves related to a complexity of situations they face, and their inability to resolve them. They, usually at the end of their performance in the play, may, but perhaps not, be aware of forces inside and outside of themselves that they cannot control. They, performing beings as they are, whole worlds of emotions and values, who are able to win wars, to make laws, to write a play, to solve a deadly riddle, and to invent a city like Athens, find out that they are creatures of complexities, torn between past and present, passion and reason, knowledge and ignorance, reality as they perceive it and reality as it is perceived by others, and that the Other is not another person, but their own self in roles opposed to each other, and that the challenges are not around them but in them, that they are as if they were two persons in one, two strangers in one, two enemies in one, in roles of subject and object simultaneously. And all they find out is that the conflicts[400] in themselves are far greater than the ones outside because they are unknown, unresolved, and far more significant than their small, short-lived display of their actions.

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[400] R.P. Winnington-Ingram adds perspective to this dichotomy in human beings as expressed in tragedies by citing Heraclitus's dictum: '*ethos anthropo daimon*'. The middle word means man – human being – the word *ethos* stands for one particular character or display of character, while *daimon* is the ultimate word of a power outside one, a power from beyond, or a divine power. For Winnington-Ingram, tragedy occurs only if the dictum implies two things at once, and can be read vice versa as well – since the syntactical and grammatical structure permits that kind of reading: a character in man is actually called a *daimon*, and a *daimon* in man is actually called a character (R. P. Winnington-Ingram, 'Tragedy and the Greek Archaic Thought' in *Classical Drama and its Influence: Essays Presented to H. D. F. Kitto*, 1965, pp. 31-50). In that sense, he testifies, not only conflict but ambiguity as well characterises the tragic individual as to whether a person really knows what character means, and what *daimon* means. And the tragic individual becomes, therefore, a creature of question rather than of certainty, more in question of who he/she is, rather than of how he/she is.

Besides the awareness of this dichotomy in tragic character which leads to questions rather than answers about human experience and existence, the character displays an *ergon*, competes with others, thinks he/she is in control of a situation, but at the outcome of the play, or even before, again, Orestes might still ask what to do, and Oedipus might still want to know who he really is, but do they find an answer? Is it possible that all they might know is that display of vocal and visual presence which, in all its totality is called performance[401], a sequence of interactions, events, competitions, and words, a long and ambiguous list of words, a performance of their performance – a wordy sequence of sounds and gazes? In that sense, the character yields to the action rather than the action to the character, and in that sense, the character is aware only of his/her performance, and therefore, he/she is mainly identified with *this* performance in the city – *just as* Sophocles and Euripides are identified with their plays, their written display. Oedipus, even Antigone, in all her certainty, Medea, Ajax, all think they are in control of their challenges or passions, but so many times, they are not; they think they are making the right decisions, but they do not, think they can ascertain the answers to their problems, but they do not; and all they might know at the end – if they ever do know – is that it only appeared as if they knew. And they, the characters, might recall Homer in his admission to the Muses: 'for you are goddesses [...] and you know all things, but we hear only a report and do not know anything'(*Iliad* 2.484-7). They might become aware of their own ignorance which is a form of an illusion of their 'worldly position'[402], and they might speak with Odysseus' words when saying: 'all of us who live are [...] a

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[401] As Mark Griffith 'Antigone and Her Sister(s)' comments, female characters, just as male ones, relied 'heavily' on conventional gestures or costumes related to women, rather 'than on distinctively feminine voice or language.' A nurse, for example, was identified as nurse 'even before a word was spoken, from mask, costume, posture, and movement.' (pp.118,119)

[402] E. R. Dodds, 'On Misunderstanding The Oedipus Rex', in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, ed. by Erich Segal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 177-188 (p. 187).

fleeting shadow' (*Ajax* 124) – seeing, perhaps, that what or whom they perceived as significant is not at all as such.

Indeed, the dramatic characters actualise – not just imitate[403]on stage – a model/agent of Athenian performing self who might be initiated by the tragedians/agents, who may come to know themselves better through taking part in various social rituals (Turner, 'The Anthropology of Performance', p.8) – the main one being their own theatrical performance.

In that sense, claims that the tragedies do not touch the social problems of people, and which place them next to texts written to serve the city's religious and political needs[404], and that the characters are only puppets in the hands of divine powers seem far from being taken for granted. As Rehm[405] argues in his analysis of fate and agency in tragedy, the above ideas generate from the 'popular Western model of progress understood as the movement from primitive ignorance to modern insight.'[406]

For him, tragedy has to do with progress, but not in an unlimited way – since fate

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[403] Performance presupposes imitation, mostly in the Aristotelian perception of it, rather than in the way Plato deals with it. Specifically, for Plato, the tragedian (*Republic*, 10.2.598B) imitates not the original Idea of an object, but the copy of an Idea, what is perceived through the senses (2.597B). And furthermore, for him, the copy/form of an object is only 'an appearance'(4.601C) of the Idea, not the Idea itself 'in nature unique' (2.597D); the imitator for Plato creates 'phantoms, not realities'(3.599A); an imitator is not like a philosopher who has a genuine knowledge of the things (3.599A), because if the imitator had a genuine knowledge of things, he would have been a philosopher, not an imitator. Besides this idea of imitation as it is expressed here, another definition of it is given by the guardians of the ideal state as a response to the tragedians who want to have their own merit in it: they say that they are tragedians(the guardians) themselves since their whole polity has been constructed as a dramatization of a noble and perfect life; and that is what they hold to be 'truth the most real of tragedies'(*Laws*,VII,817B).Aristotle on the other hand, does not adopt Plato's theory of Forms; his is the theory of 'being', and he examines what is perceived through the senses. For him, poetry or a work of art does not have to be a straightforward copy of the object imitated; poetry, in particular, for him, is concerned not with what has happened, as history does, but with the kind of thing that would happen – what is possible in accordance with probability or necessity' (*Poetics*, 51a36-8).

[404] The above claims are expressed by the anthropologist Florence Dupont (*L'Insignificance Tragique*, (Paris: Gallimard, Le Promneur,2001)), persisting in this book in the tradition of the fascinating work done by the French structuralists – such as Jean-Pierre Vernant and Nicole Loreaux among others – and presenting her view of an Athenian society as alive and complicated as any of modern times. Her views are included here as a kind of summary of this particular book because it epitomizes some of the points in the controversies encompassing in a condensed form the issues on tragedy and its characters.

[405] *Radical Theatre*, p. 69.

[406] According to this model, progress depends on a 'notion of autonomy' instead of 'collective control', on attention to personal feelings instead of attention on action, and to scientific understanding instead of belief in superstition and myth (ibid.).

affects the human choice variously, and therefore, progress means experiencing tragedy itself, not avoiding it. The tragedians expose the individual/agent who takes responsibility for their actions and words expressed as such by Oedipus: 'For there is no human being who can bear my woes but I'(1414-15), performing thus on stage what Dodds calls 'human greatness and human intelligence'(Dodds, p. 187), all the characters'. They are, certainly, political beings because they interact with others in a social setting, and because they are created by members of the Athenian city, and they also recognise the prevailing divine power. But is their responsibility or agony political? Is Sophocles' and Euripides' responsibility for what they write political? Is their awareness of human passion political?

There is also the other claim: the dramatic characters 'are different because their stories are different'[407], suggesting that the characters do not express their wishes and intentions in psychoanalytical soliloquies as the tragic drama of a later time is directed towards[408]. But the characters' actions 'provide evidence from which motives, intentions [...] are inferred; [...] the self [...] cannot be defined except as represented through actions, gestures, and speech'[409]. Actions composed by tragedians, 'rich in human interest'[410], are the ones which compose a Medea, visually and vocally present, in all her 'speech act'[411] which demonstrates her individuality. The written texts are

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[407] G.H. Gellie, *Sophocles*: *A Reading* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972), p. 202.
[408] John G. Fitch and Siobhan McElduff, 'Construction of the Self in Senecan Drama', *Mnemosyne* LV:1 (2002), pp. 8-40 (p. 21).
[409] Elizabeth Burns, *Theatricality: A Study of Convention in the Theatre and in Social Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 129-30.
[410] John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 46. In the same book, Jones supports the idea of the character's individuality by analysing at length the importance of the mask worn by the actors on stage which 'embraces the look of a man together with the truth about him. The face [...] presents the human individual, the person'; and he continues, 'the people of tragedy are the people of life, as art perceives and renders them (p.44).
[411] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 7.

the evidence of the characters' 'consistency'[412] – what Aristotle calls *anagnorisis* – so that the character displays on stage one entity of one self, different from any other.

Indeed the characters are different – as they should be – since, more than anything else, they are artistic expressions of two selves/agents, Sophocles and Euripides; and a brief encounter with the two tragedians' life reveals completely different private lives and experiences which cannot but have to have affected their self expression, and the ways the characters are drawn by them.

On the one hand, Sophocles, being older than Euripides, experiences fully the Athenian victory over Xerxes at Salamis, and in accordance with the Athenian status quo, he is a priest of Asclepius and a friend of Pericles. He dies in old age in Athens, popular – not only for his plays – and respected[413] by all to such an extent that not even Aristophanes dares to mock him in his comedies. Euripides, on the other hand, grows up closer to the whole tragedy of the Peloponnesian war, and although he is of high birth, he is satirised regularly by Aristophanes[414]. Not as popular as Sophocles, and after two unsuccessful marriages, he leaves Athens at the age of seventy to go to the court of the king of Macedonia where he writes his last plays, and dies[415] – virtually in exile. They, therefore, might be referred at as two poles of individual city existence – the conformist and the anti-conformist – whose poetic signature shouts for distinctive treatment of subjects[416] accordingly.

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[412] Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, p. 291.
[413] Taxidou, pp. 12,13.
[414] For example, in the *Acharnians* (475-479), a character says: 'Little Euripides, may I perish horribly if I ever ask again for anything, except one thing alone, just this one, just this alone: fetch me a piece of chervil from your mother.'
[415] Rehm, *The Play of Space*, p. 213.
[416] Characteristic is George Eliot's statement that Sophocles affected her 'in the delineation of the great primitive emotions' (G. S. Haight, *George Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 195), which may be read shortly as Oedipus, and which cannot include Medea – Euripides' theatrical *alter ego* – who verbally delineates her own deeds before acting them out, but is not delineated by Euripides in the Sophoclean *modus operandi* of piercing into human suffering and deception rather than the sequence of human actions.

The employment of six plays analysed in the next chapter – three by Sophocles, and three by Euripides – is considered representative enough of the plays, and rather sufficient[417] in order for fundamentally diversified comments between the two tragedians to be demonstrated. What follows, as a conclusion to the analogy between creators and creations, is an epigrammatic outline of differences and plays.

First, *Electra* and *Ajax* demonstrate the fact that Sophocles – being closer to the victorious wars, and participating in a fully grown empire, is inspired mainly by archaic/Homeric heroes and debates[418], while the relationship between the playwright and the state, through the characters' perception of the state, can be seen as an organic and 'harmonious coupling between the theatre and the state'[419]. As such, Sophocles portrays a harmonious sequence/image of the self whose interaction unfolds as in a detailed process, and unfolding distinct elements of the character.

Euripides, closer to the misery of the Peloponnesian war, rejected by the city and rejecting it, is not inspired by archaic heroes[420], and when he chooses to debate, he uses the language of rhetoric and philosophy[421], as in the case of his *Medea*: she – in

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[417] The existing plays of the three tragedians are 33, which as Rehm confirms, are 3% of the ones performed during the fifth century in Athens, and which is a good number, when analysed, 'to escape most generalizations about the genre.'(*Radical Theatre*, p.39)

[418] *Antigone* and *Oedipus* are archaic characters, while Philoctetes is inspired by Homer. Commenting on Sophocles' Homeric debates, Foley (*Female Facts in Greek Tragedy*, pp.193-94) draws the analogy between the debates of Achilles with his friends on the one hand, and Antigone with Creon on the other. According to her, Achilles (*Iliad*, 9) tries to initiate a 'new level of complexity into an argument that otherwise unfolds in conventional terms.' In the case of *Antigone*, Sophocles introduces an analytical study of characters and ethical codes, underlining thus the difference between Antigone and Creon. His method does not create a 'generalized model of ethical deliberation' in the face of Antigone; instead, it raises questions about Creon's perception of morality, and therefore, Foley concludes, in the face of him, it raises questions about Athenian values and norms.

[419] Taxidou, p.106. The above statement does not mean that the idea of city is not questioned by Sophocles; it only means that the city concept is not rejected by him. For example, in *Antigone*, it seems that at the end, the family laws coincide with the city laws – but to what extent *this* works is quite debatable; while in *Ajax*, despite the main character's turning against the community, he becomes a hero of it at the end.

[420] Foley, p. 267.

[421] Ibid., p. 193. According to Foley (253), what might be of archaic influence to Euripides is the concept of *thymos*: in Homer, it appears as anger or courage, but in Euripides, besides these two associations, includes a range of emotions 'from anger, grief, and *eros* to pity, hope, or pride'; for example, in *Medea*, it appears as *eros* (8,639), as grief (108), as anger (879); in *Heracles*, it appears as a combination of anger and grief (1211), and in *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, as anger.

contrast to Electra[422] who is an *oikos* member attached to her kinship – is the barbarian Other whose rhetoric is almost like that of an Athenian citizen in defence of his political rights. Next, in *Hippolytus*, the main character is the illegitimate son of Theseus, and an *apragmon* – both being two antithetical roles to the Athenian status quo. As for the relationship between the playwright and the city, and therefore between the individual and the state, it is problematic, even 'combative'[423]. Euripides creates rather disoriented characters who unfold their interactions abruptly, creating fragmented, edge-like moments full of rhetorical and emotional upheavals. Accordingly, in Sophocles' tragedies, the individuals experience primarily a conflict between themselves and the divine, fatal forces beyond them left unresolved as eternal dilemmas, while Euripides draws characters whose conflicting forces are mostly within them: 'left to his own devices [...] disentangled from the supernatural and restored to his dimensions, the agent is [...] cut off from the general order [...], [and] appears so indeterminate and confused.' [424]

Finally, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, and Euripides' *Bacchae*[425] are employed to epitomise the total diversity[426] between the two tragedians[427] in the faces of Oedipus

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[422] *Electra* and *Medea* are analysed under the section 'Performance of Passion', while *Ajax* and *Hippolytus* are analysed under the section 'Performance in the Community'.

[423] Taxidou, p. 12. The writer uses this word to refer to Euripides' relationship with the city, but it reflects the relationship between Euripidean characters ant the state – such as in the cases of Medea, Hippolytus, Pentheus (*Bacchae*), Ion, Hecuba, Helen, *Trojan Women.*

[424] Jean Pierre Vernant, 'Intimation of the Will in Greek Tragedy', in *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, ed. by J. P. Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquel, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 1990) pp. 49-84 (pp. 83-84).

[425] They are examined under the title 'Polarities of Performance'.

[426] If numbers were not always considered to be indispensable premises for arriving at valid conclusions, these two plays, solidly by themselves, without the analysis of any other play, would have been more than ample premises to manifest the idea of performance, and the model of performing self as perceived by Sophocles and Euripides. Indicative is the fact that scholars make remarks related only to these two plays – as opposed to any other play – about the extent of the existence of the main aspects of performance: W. B. Stanford claims, for example, that the *Oedipus Rex* is a model for the number of ambiguous words contained in it, twice as many as in any other Sophoclean play (*Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp.169-173)). And Jean Pierre Vernant affirms *Bacchae's* unique obsession to reproduce 'a plethora of words signifying seeing and visibility' (in 'The Masked Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae*', in *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, pp.381-412, (p.363)).

and Pentheus. Oedipus is the personification of the genesis of the social nature of self which is analogous to the making of the embryonic city: the becoming of the one depends of the being of the other. Oedipus's way to subjectivity goes through his coming into the city where the 'opposition between ego and object, self and other ceases to exist'[428] – despite the tragic forms this unity can initiate for the character. In *Bacchae*, on the other hand, Euripides through Pentheus, takes the unity between the city and the individual for granted, but only in order to *tear it into pieces*, to 'break down the binary between self and other, [...] individual and collective,[...]man and woman'(ibid.,p.108) creating thus a tragedy for the character and the city – criticising thus on stage the city and its institution, the tragedy (ibid.,p.101).

Clearly then, after this brief survey, the dramatic characters can be perceived as models of the Athenian performing self, who make themselves and the others aware of their own performance[429], thus, of their own selves. The analysis of each dramatic character exposes individual interpretations each of them expresses as agents who reveal themselves through acting and interacting, and cultural concepts of interaction all dramatic characters share as members of a social locus. And, although each one of them may actualise on stage a performance of one's own different for each one of them, eventually, they all may have to face their ignorance/inability to command their actions, and they all become aware of qualities they have they did not know they had.

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[427] Both these playwrights, with their plays have inspired profound and insightful comments and analyses, and consequently, the possibility that the characters and the actions are almost too well known is more than apparent. Therefore, it is simply a matter of inevitability for the analysis to concentrate strictly on the principal elements of performance, and the polarities of performance without dealing with well-recognised details of the events of the plays – even though a short summary will be attached at the beginning of each of the six plays.

[428] Taxidou, p.61

[429] The term 'performance' was defined in the section which examines the Athenian Theatre, as a synthesis of aspects of display (as were examined through religious and other rituals), not only collectively but individually as well, since the theatrical performance contains distinctive elements of individual performance in the form of the writers' text to be performed, and the performance of the individual actors on stage.

In that sense, the model of the Athenian performing self, as conceived by Sophocles and Euripides, reveals each character's conflicts with one's own self, each individual's own ambiguities and Other self – as if that unknown Other self is the Other the individual thought he/she would face in society – and each one's acceptance of one's ignorance – even though the consequences do not coincide with one's own expectations and interests.

Chapter Three

Athenian Tragedy and Performing Self

I. Performance of Passion

Sophocles' *Electra*[430]

[430] Sophocles, 'Electra', ed. and trans. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, in *Sophocles I: Ajax; Electra; Oedipus Tyrannus*, Loeb Classical Library 20 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 165-321.

Electra, living with her sister Chrysothemis, in the house where her mother Clytaemnestra with her lover Aegisthus killed their father, Agamemnon, many years ago, waits for the return of her brother Orestes to avenge their father's death. The play begins with Orestes' arrival, at first unrecognised by all, and then, after revealing his name to her, he accomplishes the death of both, his mother and Aegisthus, with the help of Electra.

Before referring to the analysis of Electra, let it be said first that, as the line of argument goes, the connection between Athenian society and tragedy is based on a proposed model of self on the one hand, and tragic character on the other – both consisting of the same mutually framed, yet diversely expressed components. As such, after defining in the first chapter the performance culture of Athens which establishes the cultural connections between society and theatre, and after defining in the second chapter the elements/components which associate the self with the character on stage, what follows now is the comparison of plays by Sophocles and Euripides which illuminates the gamut of the dramatic characters in the microcosm of their ritualistic society on stage, and demonstrates that the proposed model agent can be utilised as a model of staged characters. In addition, the cultural analysis of the dramatic characters is underlined by the fact that they are examined in pairs, consisting of one play by Sophocles and one by Euripides. In that way, the characters are compared as expressions/projections of two different tragedians of the Athenian society, and as performing selves of the culture who are consisted of the same culturally framed, yet diversely expressed components which define an individual self. The analysis of the plays therefore, focuses on the character rather than the

tragedy as described by Aristotle[431], and in accordance with the character's social roles and characteristics of the performing self.

Electra and Medea are depicted in this first unit which examines women characters for the following reasons. First, the choice of Electra to begin the discussion on Sophocles' characters is based on the view that even though Antigone is considered the most representative of the tragedian's women characters, and even though critics have challenged Electra's tragic nature and her effectiveness as a character, nevertheless, Electra, as a performing self, is, as argued, representative of Sophocles' women characters, as well as being appealing to an audience since she primarily exemplifies a family role the audience is familiar with. Another reason for the choice of Electra next to Medea is the fact that the differences between the two female characters to be examined, and therefore, the treatment of women by the two tragedians, would have been clearly conceived if both women had to deal with a matter common to both: in the case of Electra and Medea, they both deal with a matter of revenge.

Turning now to the analysis of Electra's character, it must be underlined that she can be perceived as a member of the Athenian culture and an interpreter of the culture who values her social roles, but, at the same time, initiates plans and actions – *erga* – as distinctive, catalytic, and Electra-like, as Sophocles' *erga*/tragedies about the individual's existence in the city can be, and can differ from that of Euripides'. Yet, like Euripides, Sophocles creates a female character who, on the one hand, shares conventional roles to be found among women in Athens, and on the other, she violates

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[431] Aristotle, as analysed in the previous chapter, sees tragedy as a imitation of an action ; but according to the terminology of performance adopted here, the play is an actualization of an event, not a representation of it. Besides, Aristotle's emphasis is on plot (*Poetics,*I. 3.1.2) rather than the character, while here, the emphasis is on the character.

these roles – becoming as public and political as men, demonstrating thus the controversial views surrounding women.

For one thing, Electra's social dimension cannot be missed since in the very beginning[432] of the tragedy, Orestes' tutor, when coming to Argos, points to specific places of the city, such as temples and the agora. And it is as if that setting is almost the same one that the Athenian audience – sitting at the Dionysus's theatre – sees in front of them, the setting of their own city and identity, as a continuation of the staged one. As Rehm interprets this relationship between theatre and the city environment:

> In contrast to the enclosed buildings we usually think of theaters [sic] ,[…] the audience gazed up the sky, down at the beaten earth of the orchestra, out over the city.[…] The space of such a theater[433] implies not only the order of nature and gods but also the human society of which it is part.(*The Play of Space*, p.36)

In her human society, Electra chooses to address the women of Mycenae, the chorus who listens to her woes, as *politides* (1227), female citizens[434] and not just as women. As for herself, she may primarily remind the Athenians of an *epicleros*[435], a daughter

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[432] *Antigone*(100-101) and *Oedipus* (at the very beginning) refer to city scenes as well.

[433] For reasons related to the very important element of the connection between physical space and city space, let the following be added: the theatre of Dionysus was built on the south slop of the Acropolis: the seats for the audience was the hillside itself, the flat area in front of them was the orchestra where the performers played, and the wooden stage building at the back of it was its background, the *scene*. The audience/orchestra connection was the same in all, or in most meeting places important to city/civic life, such as the Pnyx, and the law-courts. In short, the theatre lay out was a 'landscape architecture' where natural space was turned into city space. The theatre of Dionysus was close to Dionysus's sanctuary with its altar and temple (Rehm, p.38-42).

[434] Electra does not call them *politides* from the very beginning, but only when, according to Foley, she wants 'to make them witnesses to her own view of the past' and when she wants to 'stir them to lament' with her about her misfortunes (p.151). For Blundell, in general, *politides* is translated as *astai* since Athenian women did not have the same political rights as men, and therefore, they cannot be called citizens (p.128).

[435] Demosth. 57.41, Aristophanes' *Wasps*, 583-586. Under the Athenian law, any man who had only daughters could adopt a son, but the adoptee should get married to one of the daughters. In that sense,

of a father with no sons, who, although she does not have property of her own, she cannot be separated from her father's property, and 'no man could take it over without marrying her'(Blundell, p.117). Although Electra has a brother, Orestes, she may remind the spectators of an *epicleros* since she carries her father's memory as a kind of property she has inherited from the past – a task she cannot separate from, a responsibility she has to keep her father's name alive.

Because of this central role, Electra is engaged in a lament, associated as such always with women, and starting from inside their *oikos*, with a long, excruciating, internal process of rising emotions perceived as the stimulus/force of an act of violence when the woman feels socially and physically threatened by a member of her kin. Her emotion then is not simply love or jealousy, but it becomes pathos, as the title of this unit suggests, an active force emerging from suffering[436] shaped generally into revenge[437], and a verbal *agon* particularly in Athens where power through speech is part of the culture. This pathos acts as an agent of a solution to an unbearable situation the woman experiences, and its display, expressing and activating itself through cries, screams and piercing noise and words, becomes the emblem of some female characters – of Electra in this tragedy.

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an *epicleros* played a very important role in 'reinforcing patrilineal succession' (Blundell, p.118) for the Athenians.

[436] Molly Ierulli, 'The Politics of Pathos: Electra and Antigone in the Polis', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 98:3 (1999), 477-502 (p. 478).

[437] Indeed, as Burnett writes, revenge was not considered as an abnormal mode of behaviour, but a 'recognized and sometimes implemented,' even 'an outward expression of regularity that supported both society and the cosmos' not only in the pre-city society, but in the fifth century society as well (Anne Pippin Burnett, *Revenge in Attic and Later Tragedy* (London: University of California Press, 1998), p. xvi). The display of pathos also works as a kind of 'female control of discourse' (Laura McClure, 'The Worst Husband: Discourses of Praise and Blame in Euripides' *Medea*, in *Classical Philology* 94 (1999), 373-94 (p. 374)). In many cases, the way women express themselves 'represents a form of subversion that challenges the prevailing social and political organization' (p.374) of the city, and women characters become, thus, the Other, the emotional, irrational voice which might freely disturb the rational and controlled world of the Athenian citizen (see Daniel Mendelsohn, 'The Bad Boy of Athens', *The New York Review of Books*, Feb. 13, 2003 < http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16057 > [accessed March, 2003].

Indeed, to return to the city setting, when Athens decided, as already written, to marginalise the role of women by introducing public funerals and by excluding exclusive women's lamentations from them, mourning itself was not excluded: it became public and political through city funerals, and theatrical through tragedies. And as Taxidou expresses it, 'this public participation in death ritual helps construct the identity of the Athenian citizen'(p.89) – their laws, and their social or theatrical rituals.

And yet, the identity of Electra, in all the spectrum of her collective, recognised roles, is above all, as will be argued, a performing self, an agent who perceives her roles through her own individualistic conduct drawn as such by Sophocles, demonstrating thus *his* way of dealing with various roles – that of *epicleros* and mourner, *and* of a woman – in the city setting. What follows is an interpretation in the form of Electra of female city roles as perceived by Sophocles, an analysis in other words, of Electra's performing self as perceived by Sophocles.

The analysis will certainly avoid commenting on the characterization of *Electra* as being an 'optimistic'[438] play, because matricide is not its central feature. Also, to the inexhaustible number of studies, and their diversified range of psychological or related remarks, this analysis of the main character will not add another generous remark, but it will definitely attempt to clarify specific characteristics, and avoid calling Electra 'almost ridiculous', 'tattered outcast', 'hybrid', or 'absurd', 'monstrous', and 'uncanny'[439], at least not in a two-paragraph space, even if the space belongs to the concluding remarks of a chapter devoted to *Electra*. Of the many

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[438] Charles Segal, 'Electra', in *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles*, ed. by Charles Segal (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), pp. 249-291 (p. 249).
[439] Ann Pippin Burnett, 'Delphic Matricide: Sophocles' Electra', in *Revenge in Attic and Later Tragedy* (London: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 119-141 (pp. 140-1).

aspects open to a variety of interpretations, the one which captivates the attention of classicists is the presence of the urn carrying – but only fictitiously – the ashes of Orestes' body. Leaving aside any exotic correlations between the urn and the themes of the play, but immensely respecting all of them, especially those analysing the urn's 'contradictory allusions suggesting moral contradictions'[440], the analysis is inclined to follow the assumptions of this remark: 'In a society which is bound by roles and ceremonies, like that of the Greeks, symbols of status, gifts, keepsakes, heirlooms, works of art have an especially prominent place as miniature repositories of huge associations'[441]. Indeed, the centrality of the urn, of an object equivalent to the mourning itself, does not permit for any superficial assumptions to be reached. The urn is a sacred carrier of a dead person's ashes, and a symbol never to be missed as such in a society of rituals, but an empty urn perceived as full is nothing other than a symbol of deception. But is it a deception of mourning – an ironic comment, perhaps, on a sacred ritual including a dead body, family members, cries, and objects of display – or is it a deception related to Electra's mourning? The scene, as is argued, with Electra's lament, Orestes' presence, the urn, and the 'nothingness'(1166) – Orestes' ashes inside the urn as Electra thinks they are – is a 'miniature repository' of Electra's ritualistic expression of passion around memories of blood, plots of more future blood, and human absence, that of her brother's. Yet, she does not perceive the deception of her own acts, and therefore, does not realise that the past does not exist without a receptive present of a receptive self who holds an empty, taken for full, urn keeping the nothingness of the past.

Electra literally lives within her father's death, almost worships her father, and dreams about Aegisthus's death in the name of her father's memory, moving

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[440] Francis M. Dunn, 'Orestes and the Urn (Sophocles, *Electra* 54-55)', *Mnemosyne*, LI (1998),438-443 (p.441).
[441] Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, p. 77.

constantly from past to future, and perceiving herself primarily as her father's daughter, but demonstrating at the same time her main deception concerning the present: speaking constantly of the past and planning constantly about the future, she follows piously the course of her other twin, inseparable other self, as powerful, active and present as her father's; it is that she, beyond any visible doubt, is the daughter of her mother, and that she acts in the way she accuses her mother of acting. During the scene of the urn, during this single, arresting, almost ritualistic moment of this unique day of Orestes' return, Electra laments over an empty urn; and it is as if Sophocles slowly, as if ritualistically, just like her personal mourning, strips her of her relation to the present, and exposes her relation to it, not as it seems to be – a relation tormented by the unjust death of her father – but as it is: a deceptive relation with time, unreal and empty, of a woman – heroic? – left alone in her *agon* with time and against it, with her sister, her mother, and herself. She holds the ashes of a past long gone, she has only a present she hates, and wants mainly to take revenge for this empty urn of the present nothing and not so much, as it seems, for the past thing. At the end of the play, when Aegisthus asks for a moment to speak as a kind of apology, Electra does not let him, and asks her brother to kill him at once concluding with these words: 'for me this would be the only release from ancient woes!'(1490-1491) – meaning her long, mournful attachment to her father's memory . Her words demonstrate her belief in an act she does not carry out herself but which she, nevertheless, decides for, and which she herself must be satisfied with more than anyone else. Yet, she does not refer to her father, but to 'woes', as if her woes, any woes, can ever be released. What can be released is her feeling of revenge directed towards the man, Aegisthus, who caused her present problems which cry out for satisfaction.

In Electra's interpretation of her role as mourner, however, her relationship with the family past and future is her *ergon* and *agon* for keeping them alive and forceful against others' acts, values and advice. For Electra, the Other is not just Clytaemnestra, as would be expected, but the city/chorus and her family/sister as well, possibly even her brother, who does not react towards the 'ancient woes' as she does, and she disagrees with them all, thus totally monopolising her father's memory. The others are not what Electra is, and perhaps, the others suspect what she barely perceives: that the limits between her very own notion of justice and what the others call justice, and the feelings of revenge, or what the others call revenge, are less than comprehensible than they seem, and certainly far from comprehensible to Electra herself.

Electra's performing self – as her interpretation of feelings and actions are perceived by Sophocles – of displaying an *ergon* of revenge, her verbal *agon* from her private household and in connection with the other members of the family, her conflicting roles and ambiguities, and her imagining of being in control of her *ergon*, is analysed as follows: after presenting her *ergon* of worshipping the memory of her father, and its possible ambiguity, and after the presentation of her conflict with the others, it is demonstrated that Sophocles' protagonist's Other is not another individual: it is the same one, Electra, who acts out as passionately as her mother did when she killed Agamemnon because of his killing of her daughter, Iphigenia. Now, at the present time of this old line of blood, Electra, although she despises Clytaemnestra, becomes a planner of a murder to be committed by her brother – and not just a mourner, as she says, who keeps her father's memory alive. She is involved in an *ergon* of two killings, one of them a matricide, and although she is the 'agent' of one act, she is not its performer (Burnett, p. 120); in fact, she tries to

involve her sister, as well, in the murdering of Aegisthus when she hears that Orestes has been killed, although as it turns out, he has not. And, just like her mother, Electra does not feel any compunction about her act.

Sophocles' Electra, as presented to the Athenian audience, is active, antagonistic, competitive, controversial and ambiguous. And perhaps her brother Orestes seems more socially active in his going off, visiting Delphi, as many respectful worshippers did, and as probably Sophocles[442] had done, participating in a contest, and eventually returning to Argos to kill Aegisthus, but Electra is not passive in her physically static relation with her city. Electra's life in her father's *oikos* is the complete opposite of her sister's who lives silently and passively – as Athenian women are expected to live – compromising with an anomaly of a family still alive in the house of Atreus. Electra's being in the palace is anything but silent and passive: it is that of a restless, moving, noisy, crying creature standing before the women of Argos, mourning her father, reminding them of her father's monstrous death, waiting for Orestes' return, and pitying her grievous fate of solitude. What can be more passionate and verbally active than that?

> […] how often I lament for my unhappy
>
> father, whom the bloody war-god did not make his guest
>
> […], but my mother and her bedfellow
>
> Aegisthus, split his head with a murderous axe, […].
>
> […] send to me my brother! For I have no longer
>
> strength to bear alone the burden of grief that weighs me
>
> down (94-120).

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[442] Sophocles did not travel to Sicily as Aeschylus had done, and he had never visited Macedonia as Euripides had, where, in fact, he died.

The above portion of her words demonstrates that she does not invite communication with anyone willing to listen, but that she calls and asks for participation, the women's, gods' and nature's. Her words as a mourner become actually the projection of her identity as Agamemnon's daughter asking not for sympathy or even understanding, but to establish nothing less than her solid identity as a woman-avenger of her father's death. This is why her call to gods include, besides Hades or Persephone, the 'powerful Curse and Erinyes'; and when she compares herself with a bird, she specifies the nightingale and the horrifying myth (or myths related to it) of double allusion according to which Procne's transformation into a nightingale eternally weeping for her killing of her own son contains both elements of mourning and elements of revenge[443]. Electra refers unceasingly to her father's death (95-99, 201-207), and unceasingly she wants Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus to pay for it, 'for if they do not that would be the end of reverence and of piety of all mortals' (240). In a way, Electra absorbs the most sacred concepts of the city, such as matters of piety, in order to justify her mourning, and to activate everybody into being her supporter.

Her unqualified, total, strident mourning in display is hers only, totally, actively hers, as if there was no one else but herself in the house to emphasise their kinship, love, devotion, and duty. Always her 'I' is magnificently single and impressively selfish in her perception of keeping the memory alive:

> I shall not hold back from this
> ruinous action, so long as life maintains me!(217-218)
>
> May I never enjoy honour
>
> among such people, and never may I live contentedly
>
> [...] if I restrain the wings of

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[443] Molly Ierulli,, p. 489.

loud lamentation, dishonouring my father.(240-241)

Not only does she consider herself totally responsible to keep the deed of remembering alive, but she does not have any sympathy for the one who 'forgets the piteous ends of parents', and she names such a person 'foolish'(145). Is it possible that she considers Orestes 'foolish' as well, who postpones his coming, but who will emphatically be the one she awaits for the killing of Aegisthus, because she knows she cannot do the killing herself? And what about her sisters Chrysothemis and Iphianassa who are also Agamemnon's daughters?

Electra's *ergon* of remembering is hers alone, a lonely *ergon* of a proud person in an almost competitive relationship with the other survivors of her father's family line, in her heroic duty to be the one responsible for the revenge since she is the 'I' – not the 'we' as would have been expected from her since she is the emblem of the family memory – who loves her father and suffers for him. Her love is superior, her memory is superior, and her suffering is exceptional – a long and endless suffering in her *agon* with time past, perceived as present, and her present perceived as future, for the sake of past, present and eternal time as if she is the only one in control of time – but time for what? For what suffering?

When Electra expresses her longing to see Orestes' return, to put 'a stop to this', 'this' comes as the epitome of her long description (261-295) of what she perceives to be seeing at the palace, and what she feels being in the palace:

> And then what
>
> kind of days do you think I pass when I see Aegisthus
>
> sitting on my father's throne […]
>
> But I, poor creature, in the house weep, and pine
>
> away, and lament alone and to myself the abominable

feast that bears my father's name; (262- 284)

Her *oikos*, through her description, is not a *topos* of privacy, but of public concern, a *topos* open to the gaze of others, and therefore, a spoken tool in Electra's rhetoric like the ones used by Athenian orators before a jury in order to activate the jury's sympathy and support for their defendant.

Indeed, Electra agonises; even her 'hateful bed in the miserable house knows of the sorrows of my [*sic*] sleepless nights' (91) – nights during which she is not 'permitted even to weep as much as my [*sic*] heart desires' (282). She endures her pain – visual and vocal – but, is it not true that she emphasises as well her weeping over her own situation?

> […] lost, without child or
> bridegroom, drenched in tears, with my never-ending
> fate of sorrows?(164-167).

> Yes, I melt away without
> offspring, I who have no husband to protect me, but like a
> lowborn slave serve in the chambers of my father, in such
> mean attire as this, and stand at empty tables!(187-192).

It becomes clearer that, besides the 'I' and the 'my' which dominate the speech, the emphasis is on children, but not children read as a continuation of the line of Agamemnon, as would be expected from an *epicleros* probably, but as *her* 'offspring', of an Electra lost without them and without a 'bridegroom'. And then, comes the other line on slavery, her slavery, next to the line on her being without a husband. Undoubtedly, a character talking to an Athenian audience is aware of the fact that Athenians – having such a huge number[444] of slaves in their city – value a lot their

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[444] As mentioned in the first chapter, the number of slaves was about 90.000

freedom, and understand the difference between a slave and non-slave. Electra emphasises the fact that she does not feel free in her *oikos*, but she also emphasises the fact that being married and having children would have been a blessing. In that sense, she seems to perceive marriage and children, not as a ground of hardships from which women would like to escape – as they demonstrate they would have liked when participating in Dionysian rituals[445] – but as a ground of a woman's dominance in her household, and in the city through the children/future citizens.

And the revenge of the original mourner-daughter of Agamemnon transforms into the passion of a woman – not of a child, daughter or sister – but of a childless woman, a woman of no future as a wife and mother, whose role in the city spectrum cannot become secure; and her suffering, her active *ergon* of words wants Orestes to come to put an end to 'this', not to the old suffering and family misery, but to this new misery, the non-heroic, and the most grievous one. And it is also possible that her old pathos is lost in a lost new present, and the suffering-revenge ends as bitterness and hatred.

Electra's words until this scene cannot help but be interpreted as suggestive of her self – the other one? – who slowly absorbs and swallows her old one. They are a kind of foreshadowing of her coming words – and actions – towards the end of the play which are almost unrecognisable from the ones in the beginning in connection with Electra, and the lamenting, even lyrical tones that she uses to describe her pain.

Yet, in her *agon* with time, and what she describes as her *agon* thus far, her *logos* (words) in active forms is shaped openly and obviously against Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus as the Other(s) in her fight for the sake of memory. They are her antagonists for being who they are – lovers sleeping in her father's bed – and of doing

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[445] In the so called 'ecstatic rites' of Dionysus in which the women participants were known as Maenads, they were rebelling against the man`s authority and their roles in marriage life. These rites were taken place mainly in Biotia, and certain parts of Peloponnesus (Blundell, pp. 166 -169)

what they did – murderers. Electra's words are against seeing them, living with them, forgiving them, and eventually, her words are meant to be shaped into action in the form of punishment against them. They are the known Others, but they are not the only Others. Despite the legitimate innocence of the community and her sister, Electra antagonises them all in her ever-lasting performance of passion which does not seem to listen to any voice of reason, moderation, or argument, as if her cry of passion is the only cry of non-compromise in a passive city of compromises, according to her, which seems to lack Electra's fidelity to principles of old heroism, and of sharing the lament for the dead with family and non-family members, and as such, refuses to go back to the years of Troy and dead heroes (C. Segal, 'Electra' p. 253) to find its passion and heroism again. And although Electra's scene and dialogue with Clytaemnestra sounds as if it is repeated ceaselessly through time between (ibid., p. 263) the mother and the daughter – with its tones of hatred and overpowering accusations – other scenes with the same echoes occur in Electra's dialogues-*agones* with the others in the community.

As probably expected therefore, Clytaemnestra does not pity her daughter for her fate because, as she says, Electra is not 'the only one that has lost a father', and she is not the only mortal who 'mourns a loss'(285-286). She is also not the one who understands the reason her mother killed her father, a reason/justification for Clytaemnestra because he had killed what was hers, but not for Electra who does not accuse her father of sacrificing Iphigenia. He, according to Electra's thin argument, did not have any other choice but to kill because Artemis was angry at him for killing a 'dappled, horned stag' in the 'sacred grove'(568): 'that's how she came to be sacrificed'(570). The verbal *agon* over the meaning of justice between the two women can be taken only as a demonstration of 'breathing forth anger' rather than of

a serious consideration of justice (610-611), seen as such from the chorus's perception of the objective participant.

As not expected however, another family member, Chrysothemis, is not entirely sympathetic towards Electra's interpretation of their family's misfortunes, and she disagrees with her. Although she knows that justice 'lies in what' Electra believes, she is inclined to 'obey those in power' in order to 'live in freedom'(338-340), and to Electra's accusations that she betrays their father's memory, she answers that their father will pardon them'(401), and that 'honour requires that one should not come to grief through foolishness'(398), demonstrating with these statements her awareness of family duties as well as family survival. Chrysothemis' contrasting view reveals a silent family member, not a mourner/avenger; and although she realises Electra's rightness, she does not want to act in the name of her sister's justice because she, as a woman more than anything else, recognises the limits of her actions. She is more like a mourner of the public funerals of war victims who participate in the ritual without raising any voice of complaint about the misfortune of their family's dead warrior caused by the city's decisions and laws..

Yet, the antithesis between the two sisters is mainly revealed when Electra – turned into an Athenian-court's 'deceptive rhetorician' whose aim is to win a case even by insulting members of the same family (Ieruli, p. 481) – aims to persuade Chrysothemis to their killing of Aegisthus together, at a time when she believes Orestes to be dead. Her reasons include their total lack of having anyone else to help them, since they are left in spinsterhood with no friends, and that it is their duty to their father and the idea of freedom to go along with the deed. Then, she concludes, everybody will admire them, and 'look on these sisters'. And,

such things will be said

> of us by all men, so that in life and death our fame will never die. Come,[…], save my sorrows, and save your self, recognizing that a shameful life is shameful for those nobly born!(945-980).

Words such as 'fame' and 'shameful' underline the importance of the others' opinion in family matters, and the degree to which the interconnection between private and public areas is an issue of vital importance of the Athenian society. Sophocles, through Electra's stage space dominance creates a powerful connection of the two – private and public – not only in terms of human presence, but in terms of the context of words she shares with her family members, the chorus, and the audience beyond the orchestra ground.

To this city/court agonistic rhetoric of social acceptance and honour, Chrysothemis's reply seems less than fame-oriented, but more level-headed than her sister's, yet certainly as agonistic as hers. She reminds Electra that she had not reacted when the killing occurred – accusing her therefore of a certain passivity – and she goes on to state that they are weak women whose days of power have ended long ago, and that fame won't do anything for them if they die an ignominious death. Instead, she concludes, they have to accept life as it is: 'restrain your passion! […] acquire the sense to yield to those in power when you have no strength' (990-1015).

Chrysothemis's ally in her *agon* against Electra is the chorus, in a role of a minor Other, always there, more than willing to listen and express a series of opinions, not necessarily in agreement with those of any, especially with Electra's. By all means, the chorus cannot lament the dead, as Electra would want to: in the fifth-century Athens, as already discussed, it is a violation of the law for non-family members to lament for a dead person, as was permitted in all funeral rites. What the chorus can do

is that in the two sisters' argument, the women remind the two sisters that 'there is profit in the words of both, if you would learn to make use of hers and she in turn of yours'(369-371), while the same women of Argos sound like their mother when Electra expresses her certainty over the greatness of her despair: 'not to you alone among mortals, my child, has sorrow been made'(153), and they even go a little further by asking her to consider the fact that her laments 'will never raise up your father from the lake of Hades, to which all must come, by weeping or by prayers!'(137-138). They do openly disagree with her idea of justice in connection with her father's death, and the women's advice is 'not to create misery by means of misery'(235), and to recognise the situation she has created for herself: 'you have got yourself evil in excess by ever creating wars for your sorrowful soul! Put up with this! You cannot struggle against those in power!'(210-212) The same chorus, when facing Electra's strong, single-minded stance originating from her stubborn ideas about her pain or reasoning, have nothing more to add: 'I have come, daughter, in your interest and also in my own. But if what I say is wrong, have your way, because we shall follow you'(251-253).

Even Orestes, in all his manly willingness to be her agent, in all his awareness of the necessity of the killings and of Apollo's blessing of the matricide, expresses doubts concerning their involvement in the killing of their mother after the completion of their act: 'all is well, *if* Apollo prophesied well'(1425), he says, and asks Electra not to be overwhelmed by happiness.

But Electra, when he comes, is overcome with joy, and she is unwilling to consider any doubt even before the matricide, which, along with Aegisthus's killing, they will perform. In spite of all the others' arguments, doubts and suggestions in the name of moderation, compromise, community wisdom, human weakness, or in the name of the

rule of the majority, Electra persists. During all these long years of waiting, her ancestors' memory voices of silence – her father's acts of blood and ancient passions – shaping into her own voice of passion, make her live in every single minute of her life *the* action of murdering, hers and her brother's action, and make her live its success before the action of revenge itself.

Is Electra's coming action of revenge, the way she means it and the way she talks about it, comprehensible to the audience of Athenian courts and legal justice? Although legal cases and verdicts, judging from the popularity of court rooms, are taken for granted in Athens, there is no doubt that the people were coming from a long tradition of oral poetry which contained cases of revenge[446]. But mostly, as Foley writes, ' in the agonistic [...] society of Athens, cultural memories of feud and revenge would have been attractive and productive of ambivalence [...]. Permitting women a major role in dramatic vendetta may well have served to reinforce that ambivalence for the audience', and preserve, therefore, the collective memory (p.154) which, as shown, was extremely important for the Athenian performance culture. And the tragedians, as recipients of this memory and culture, were projecting it through female characters who were expressing it in their own ambivalent but comprehensible ways.

For Electra, to return to the tragedy, it is as if the action does not happen in her fantasy, or it is as if it will happen in some future time, but it happens every moment, here, somewhere inside the palace of Atreus where she and her passion age together 'the whole, the whole time'(1253), not the now and then, but the time which grows into passion, and the passion which transforms into action, and the action which ceases the time, and the passion; it is Electra's time which ceases them all, and it

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[446] As for example in *Odyssey*, at the arrival of Odysseus to his house, he takes revenge on the suitors. In classical Athens, cases of revenge were reported mostly in courts, rather than out of them: Dem. 47.72, 23.74, Antiphon 1.2-4, Plato, *Laws* 9.871a-c.

becomes an ever-lasting torture that only death can finish – a wish Electra expresses when she hears that Orestes is dead.

Electra's actions resemble for some critics, those of Ajax's in his relation to 'heroic time' (C. Segal, p. 263) and in his choice of death over compromise; it should be added that she may also resemble him in his relation to the community as well. Like Ajax, Electra accepts the role of the community, and in her case specifically, she relies on those who 'repay kindness in every sort of friendship'(134), but also like him, she counts on the community who praise those 'who preserved their father's house' and 'honoured them at feasts and among the assembled citizens for their courage'(974, 976). On the other hand, she is 'unwilling to give over and not to lament'(131) for her father as the chorus asks her to do, and she simply asks them 'to bear with her'(256) and her insistence on her causes. For both Ajax and Electra, their society's rituals and fame are well-accepted – a source of reference and solidarity for them both – but only if the society bears with them and their causes or deeds; otherwise they ask to be left alone. Electra promises to her sister social glory and justification for the killing of their father's murderer, but does killing their mother initiate social fame and recognition as well? Not for Orestes, as it seems, who calls for caution, and he pronounces *if* Apollo's prophecy is right, questioning therefore the divine order itself.

But Electra does not wonder. Social justification for her is that which is beneficial for her own causes, or otherwise, she does not recognise any other meaning. Her Erinyes and god of Curse are called for her mother's crimes but not for hers.

In fact, Electra's conflicting dealings with the social rules are only a portion of her ambivalent roles in the community, expressed mainly in her dialogues with her sister.

According to Electra, her sister is a coward (351) for not doing anything to honour their father; but, actually, it is her sister who wishes that Electra could have acted at the time their 'father perished', and it is Electra who admits that she 'had less understanding' (1023) then than she has now, indicating that she could have acted then had she been decisive enough. Additionally, Electra's further accusations against her sister come rather early in the tragedy, at least before the time Electra has described her plan for their joint killing of Aegisthus. In this early scene, Electra expects Chrysothemis to act out her hatred against their mother and her lover not by doing anything extravagant but by constantly accusing them with words as she herself does. And since her sister does not do this, Electra considers her 'a traitor' (367). Later though, when she thinks Orestes will not come, she dismisses completely the former argument, and she asks her sister, the 'traitor', to help her with the murder. In this same speech to her, Electra contrasts her life with that of her sister's in the palace and the 'privileges' she has in it, while Electra does not want any; but 'it is food enough not to give pain to herself' (363), she says. But does she mean it? What exactly does she mean? Does she really go around not giving pain to herself having her 'peace of mind'?[447] It actually seems that Chrysothemis, and not Electra, has her peace of mind: Electra, in the palace or out of it, does not give the impression that she does not give pain to herself, unless she is unwilling to communicate her idea of the pain she refers at.

Finally, in Electra's perception of dealing with her sister and her contradictions, when Chrysothemis points out to her that 'being right' (1042) is sometimes even dangerous – implying that it can involve killing somebody – Electra refuses to accept the truth of the matter, and concludes bluntly that they cannot communicate anymore.

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[447] as translated by E. F. Watling, in *Sophocles: Electra and Other Plays* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 79.

She demonstrates at the very moment of her sister's words about the dangers of being right: she prefers to stop communicating with her sister, with a member of her family, with her father's other daughter, in the name of being right. For, according to Electra's personal interpretation of right, it is right to insist on being right in the name of being right despite any sacred family ties she claims she honours so far.

Even more, Electra's contradictions are at their peak during her dialogue with her mother, as expected. In an instant, Clytaemnestra asks her daughter whether she and Orestes will ever stop wanting revenge, and Electra answers: 'we have been stopped, far from our stopping you!'(796); but in reality, Electra, not before, nor after, not ever has she been stopped – with or without Orestes; she is always after her mother, accusing her, insulting her, cursing her, and demanding revenge. She is more than willing to excuse her father for sacrificing Iphigenia, but she is more than simply eager to condemn her mother for taking her father's life because he took her sister's life (578-579). In the case of Clytaemnestra and her father, she does not accept the law – her mother's – of taking 'a life for a life'(582); in her own case though, she intends to take Aegisthus's life for her father's life.

The two women exchange words of confession, accusation, and justification for their acts, or they exchange simply words, the mother to the daughter, and the daughter to the mother, and it is not certain, for instance, who says 'I and my words and my actions make you say all too much'(622-623), and who answers 'for you do the deed, and it is deeds that find the words'(624-625). The angry words exchange receivers, and the tone of the one woman mirrors that of the other in an *agon* of two dynamic women whose justice of passion exceeds the laws/rules of the city.

They do not exchange words for the chorus to hear their argument – the chorus is barely there for them; while the audience of the Athenians most likely visualise the

image of one, single female figure with two voices and two bodies, as if the one is the shadow figure or copy of the other, as if both take turns in constructing one long, monologue of pathos, with no beginning or end, a monologue of the tormenting experiences of two agonising women in their *agon* against men or for men, but mostly, in an *agon* with each other. Or is it an *agon* between two faces of the same individual of a woman who can be a murderer and a lover at the same time, or a daughter of a father/prey and of a mother/assassin at the same time? The two women become one, single woman of passion.

Even Electra recognises that she sounds like her mother, and that she behaves like her: 'If I am an expert in such a behaviour, I think I am no unworthy child of yours'(608-609). Electra definitely does not mean that her total behaviour resembles that of her mother; she refers only to her being 'loud-mouthed or full of shamelessness'(606) as Clytaemnestra accuses her of being. In fact, Electra's words and tone, even at these antagonistic moments with her mother still carry in them soft sounds and echoes similar to the old ones employed by her at the beginning of the play: 'you may know that I feel shame at this, even if you do not think so, and I am aware that my actions are wrong for my age and unlike my nature'(616-618).

Gradually though, from the time she is heard to lament her 'unhappy father', until now, she changes, and she may remind the audience of the much recognised figure of Clytaemnestra in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. Although it is true that Electra does not commit a murder like her mother, she nevertheless may wake up memories related to her mother's performance of passion.

Recollecting Electra's dealing with an act of revenge and what she displayed as an act of revenge, originally, she appears to lament about her father, and about herself, to ask for the chorus`s and her sister`s support, and mostly, to emphasise her kinship

role. But gradually, Electra stops lamenting about her father, stops talking about the past, stops asking the chorus's or the sister's support, and introduces new elements to her speech such as honour, fame, arrogance, and complete control of her plans and actions, as already analysed. In short, her total displayed speech becomes a mixture of a woman's and a man's speech – like Clytaemnisra's in *Agamemnon*. As such, her mother exposes her female characteristic of believing in dreams (274), but later, she compares her action to a libation to Zeus poured only by men(1385-87) at symposia, as she says. She plays the role of an elder man of the chorus by announcing the entrance of a messenger(489-98), but then she prefers to hear the message from her husband. She seems sensible to the chorus when she expresses the view that desire (*eros* 341) led the army to Troy, but they are horrified when she, unlike a woman, boasts over Agamemnon's dead body (1399-1400), and she wants everybody to rejoice with her (1394). Both, mother and daughter express what McClure, in her analysis of her, calls 'public addresses in masculine style [...] and speech that [...] reinforces traditional female roles.'[448] Both women contain two roles in one, and may express the 'recurrent theme of sexual boundary-crossing' known so well from rituals to Dionysus mainly in which men and women[449] imitate each other, and assume

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[448] Laura McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp.71-80.

[449] The city ritual of Thesmophoria is the oldest and most widespread in honour of Demeter celebrated only by women in the centre of the city (it is unclear whether slaves or hetaerae take part in them). Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria* 294 mentions a slave, and so does Isaeus (6.50), although scholars insist that these sources are 'not trustworthy' (Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p 442)): for the two days of the ceremonies, the women are gathered at the Thesmophorion on the Pynx (in most cities, the Thesmophorion is outside the walls; in Athens, its centrality is quite unusual). The political aspect of the festival is found in Thebes and other places (Bowie, p. 207.f.42); and men are entirely absent from the scene of the law courts and the Assembly: they are replaced instead – at least symbolically – by women (Bowie, p. 206), who 'worship Demeter both as the safe, domestic `Bee` and as attackers of men` (Frederick Williams, *Callimachus' Hymn to Apollo: a commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 92-4).

Although the sequence of events is a bit uncertain, in the early part of the festival-ritual

> models of snakes and male genitals made from dough were handled
> and women indulged in *aischrologia* (obscene language) [...then]
> the rotten remains of pigs which had been thrown down [...]
> earlier [were taken out and] placed on the altars, whence they were

temporarily the role of the Other (Blundell, p.176). At the same time, though, both women's speech may demonstrate the ambivalent ways tragedians, and the Athenian society, deal with women and their roles in the society.

To return to the tragedy, Electra, seemingly unaware first, and only slightly so afterwards, changes, and emerges into a Clytaemnestra-to-be figure through her words and the tenor of her sentences. And, gradually comes awareness to the spectators that the words become harsh words, and eventually harsh actions, and both are means which connect the self-to-be with the words, with the sound of the words and the action of the words, and they come to finalise Electra's performing self.

Indeed, Electra resembles her mother when she accuses of her sister that all the latter's 'lecturing'(343) to her is learned from their mother, and she challenges her for not having an opinion of her own; but afterwards, if this was the case, and her mother was actually guilty of asking Chrysothemis to follow her advice, she herself asks Chrysothemis to do the same and follow her sister's advice(943). Therefore, Electra herself is guilty of asking the sister not to have an opinion of her own, but simply to 'bring yourself [*sic*] to do what I advise'. And when Electra shouts that her 'lips are set free' the moment she knows her brother is back, and Orestes asks her to 'guard that freedom'(1257), she echoes Clytaemnestra's relief on hearing that Orestes is

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taken to fertilise the fields. [...After the second day of] fasting [...] the celebrations of Persephone's return began [...]. [It ...] involved the eating of meat and the ritual slaughter of pigs. Normal life is thus restored as rotten carcasses give way to cooked food (Bowie, p. 207-208).

In Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria,* lines referred to the ritual are the following:76-78, 286-91, 329-31, 947-9, 984.

It is thus very nearly consequential to infer that at the Thesmophoria, the role of women as 'guarantors of the continuity of household (*oikos*) and city is formally [...] celebrated'(Bowie, p. 206), since for a time, the city of men surrenders to the city of women, not to govern, but to worship ceremoniously the goddess of fertility and human pain. And the men participate silently in the sacred events acted out by women because the women perform a work, an act (*ergon*) for a goddess, just as they perform an *ergon* for the city of all by meeting at the Assembly, or by following the set of laws in the court room for implementing charges against a law abuser.

dead: 'I have been freed from the fear inspired by this woman'(783-784) – she means her daughter.

And similar to her mother, during Orestes's murder of their mother, she is a woman of no regret, of no second thoughts or doubts over her deeds, but she is an executioner in a repeated, known act of no mercy and no escape. At the moment of the matricide, Electra urges the women outside the palace to be silent to hear the sounds coming from the palace, and when Clytaemnestra's screams overwhelm everyone's space and memory, Electra communicates her joy to the chorus: 'Do you hear, my friends?'(1406), as if they would ever miss hearing such cries. Then, comes a final side exchange of passion between mother and daughter – Clytaemnestra calling for Aegisthus to help her, and Electra shouting back to her to stop calling for help – followed by her order – or is it her mother's familiar order? – to Orestes – or to any man, or to all? 'Strike twice as hard, if you have the strength!'(1416). Although a second killing, that of Aegisthus, comes shortly, the scene of the matricide is Electra's moment of utmost exhilaration in all its horror and feelings of hatred, in its form of absolute evil, an act which cannot initiate any feelings of sympathy for those reaching toward extreme levels of human acts.

The play comes to a close with the chorus pointing to the fact that what started long ago is completed now: 'Seed of Atreus [...] you have at last emerged in freedom made complete by this day's enterprise'(1509-1510), and order seems to be restored in a land of disorder, of instability, and ambiguities, with this last public statement. Of the references to stability in the play, besides the usual one to the city of Athens 'built by gods'(707), the presence of the chorus settles the plot into its place in time and myth, giving shape to the city's vulnerable dimensions and 'ancient woes'. The chorus does not condemn the act – as they did in Agamemnon – and they see

'freedom' coming out of revenge, being even reluctant to 'find fault with' (1423) Orestes' matricide: besides having the approval of Apollo, Orestes has the approval of the city; in a way the chorus units the house with the community for the sake of both, for their survival, continuation, even freedom of both.

Yet, the chorus's ever-lasting presence is simply there. The *ergon* is Electra's – ambiguous, antagonistic, passionately homicidal.

But is it tragic? Reinhardt, for example, goes as far as to pronounce that the tragedy displays

> a suffering whose cause is wholly imaginary and un-
> founded, the violence of which greatly overshadows
> the true fearsomeness of the revenge and the deed to be
> avenged. Thus this 'tragedy' differs in two ways from the
> original form of the story: in taking lightly what should be
> taken seriously, and in taking seriously what should be
> taken lightly.[450]

Murray dismisses Electra altogether as 'artificial'[451], while the tragedy as a whole presents 'a certain bluntness of moral imagination'. Still, others insist, concentrating on Electra, on the character and 'the destruction of a personality once capable of love' (C. Segal, p. 249).

Indeed, Electra's performing self is tragic in her dealing with a deed far greater than her capabilities as a daughter of a murdered father and a woman of revenge. Electra thought she was in control of her passion for revenge and the act of murder – and in fact, it seems as if she is in control of her actions and herself because she is

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[450] Karl Reinhardt, *Sophocles*, trans. By Hazel Harvey and David Harvey (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979), p. 137.
[451] Gilbert Murray, *The Literature of Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 236, 239.

capable of keeping her passion alive – of visualising what kept her passion alive, and of accomplishing what kept her passion alive. But in the process, with all her zest, she becomes unaware of the fact that she is not in control of being the daughter loving her father. Her action converts her into a performer mainly capable of hatred, capable of returning to the past only for the sake of the past: she worships it and she uses it as a place of woes which initiates feelings of destruction and death; and the image of this past which she holds with her at all times turns her into the person she detested the most, her mother. In that sense, she is a tragic person – not deceptive or empty like the urn she holds at the most ritualistic moment of the play. At the end of the tragedy, she is probably incapable of holding it either, of holding anything that represents her old feeling of love. She is only capable of holding on to her tragedy.

And she is probably only able to say – as if breathing :

> I woke up with this marble head in my hands
> which exhausts my elbows and I do not know where to set it down.
> […]
> I speak to the mouth which keeps trying to speak
> I hold the cheeks which have passed beyond the skin
> I have no more strength.
>
> My hands disappear and come back to me mutilated[452].

Electra's dramatic character, emerging as such from Sophocles' perception of the Athenian culture of interconnection between public and private, between heroic past and challenging present, between kinship laments and rhetoric speeches, displays, visually and verbally, her conflicts and ambiguities, and acts her woman's *ergon/agon*

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[452] George Seferis, 'Mythistorima 3', in *George Seferis: Collected Poems*, trans. , ed., and introduced by Edmund Keely and Philip Sherrard (Princeton, N J: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 5.

of revenge against the Other force she chooses to compete with. But, she ends up acting against her own self presented as such on the stage of the Athenian theatre.

To epitomise the analysis of Electra's self, as conceived by Sophocles, in her relation to her family and community, she reveals a self who seems to know the reasons and ways she wants to act and interact to achieve her goals, yet, because of these very actions which she has planned for years, her new self is not anymore the performer of a future revenge, but a performer of a present execution, or actually, of two executions.

Electra's performing self, or rather the model emerging out of her, in this first acquaintance with Sophocles' characters of his tragedies, emphasises the dominance of roles related to *oikos*, to blood ties, and to family passions which, despite the vigorous city with its politics of rational ideas and values, may haunt the individual women more than men, and come forward in the form of sterile, Electra-like obsessions – of looking back at a past, dear, grand, and Homeric, a past-present probably, familiar, and controversial, persisting and remembering monolithic paths of old performances of passion in a city of contradictions and tensions.

In the next tragedy, *Medea*, Euripides explores another phase of woman's passion of revenge related to her *oikos* members, but his character does not look at a glorious past in order to worship it, but only as a part of her present existence in the city.

Euripides' *Medea*[453]

After a number of wicked acts to assist Jason in his deeds, Medea and he are to be found in Corinth where Jason deserts Medea to marry king Creon's daughter for economic reasons. An outraged Medea, refusing to accept his excuses but above all the insult, and in order to injure him in every possible way, besides murdering father and bride-to-be, kills her own children. Then, by supernatural means, she escapes to Athens.

The second woman/character under consideration who demonstrates the connection between society and tragedy is Medea. Although she can hardly remind the audience of a character like Electra – attached as the latter is to her family past – Medea is, first of all, a woman who, like Electra, performs her act of revenge, and second, is like one of the many women foreigners[454] of Athenian society – the hetaerae or the concubines primarily – who live in Athens even though they are deprived of Athenian women's rights. Medea's analysis immediately after that of Electra, besides demonstrating the contrasting ways Sophocles and Euripides construct women characters and their feelings, initiates the discussion on women outsiders who, through their presence, words, and actions, belong to Athenian society just like Electra does. Yet, as Euripides – being an insider who turns into an outsider during the last years of his life – demonstrates, Athenian society, despite its political ideas and ideals, does not treat equally all individuals, and all classes of individuals. He, more than Sophocles, is

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[453] Euripides, 'Medea', ed. and trans. by David Kovacs, in *Euripides I: Cyclops; Alcestis; Medea*, Loeb Classical Library 12 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 293-427.

[454] The subject of foreign women in the Athenian society and culture will be discussed in the analysis of *Ajax*.

involved with the subject of outsiders, their feelings and reactions in connection to Athenian society, and the society's dealing with them.

As such, let it be said first, that his female character of passion and revenge does not resemble Electra in terms of collective roles and plans. Medea is not a dead king's daughter, and does not have a brother or a sister to support and assist her with her plans of revenge. The primary position kinship relationships play in Sophocles' tragedy – in the form of memories and family honour – do not exist in *Medea*. Her legitimate, collective role is that of a non-Greek who challenges Jason and the others with three weapons that are highly respected by them and by the city: her rhetorical skills, the oath between Jason and herself that was broken by him, and their children.

And unlike Sophocles who, on the one hand gives a passionate voice to a woman to defend her position, as well as commenting on the family's strong interconnection with the city, but, without challenging the norms of the city and the role of women in it, Euripides' interpretation of the city culture refers to problems caused by men's dishonesty and passions – a rather radical outcome originated in the ideas of an anti-conformist tragedian.

What Euripides and Sophocles share is, besides the verbal ways Electra and Medea express their strong feelings of revenge associated as such always with women, the ambivalent ways both tragedians portray their women characters.

First though, it is important to be said that Medea, along with other of Euripides' characters in tragedies such as *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women, Andromache*, are the non-Greek women, the barbarians[455], whose invasion into the theatre starts with the appearance of Xerxes' mother in Aescylus's *Persians* in 472 BC. The play, coming out of the Greeks' experience of the Persian Wars, presents the defeat of the imperial

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[455] The word appears as *barbarophonos* in *Iliad* (2.867). and Thucydides refers to it in 1.3

army, and, it teaches, as Hall argues, 'the moral truth that gods cut down the great'[456] – a much celebrated theme by the Greeks who, more than anything else, perceive the expansive spirit of the Persians, and their defeat by the Greeks, as a reference point of their own sense of collective identity[457] expressed in theatre by the presence of the barbarian/Other. The antithesis between the two, the Greek and the barbarian, appears in the shape of remarks about cultural and political differences made publicly in Athens[458], in speeches as well as on stage. In the *Persians*, for example, the queen is astonished to find out that Athens does not have a king (241-243), Hecuba is surprised by the rights given to slaves (291-292), Helen pronounces all living under barbarians as slaves (276), while Medea confesses that her coming to Greece meant adjusting to new laws and customs (238-140).

And although most of these differences imply the superiority of the Greek world – expressed at its best by Odysseus's intelligence in his clash with the Cyclops, the ultimate stereotype of Greek astuteness – characters such as Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, Polyxene in *Hecuba*, or the *Trojan Women*, are far from not being as noble and superior as Greeks are supposed to be in terms of their values and feelings. In that sense, the ambivalent ways of portraying barbarians resemble the conflicting ways women are portrayed on stage – for reasons discussed already – but now, what makes tragedians, and Euripides in particular, deal in such a way with barbarian characters?

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[456] Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.70.

[457] The collective identity was expressed mainly by the Delian League under the leadership of Athens, and, as Thucydides writes (1.96), its purpose was mainly to keep the Persians as closer as possible to the East, and to make them pay for the destructions of the war.

[458] Thucydides (1.6) writes that there were certain customs which were abandoned by the Greeks, but were kept by the barbarians; and in 2.37, he reports Pericles saying that the unwritten laws were certainly respected in democracy, but not in despotic regimes. Also, Demosthenes (15.15) calls those living under a despotic regime 'slaves of barbarians'.

One reason could be the contradictory ways the Greek world perceives countries older than it which supplied the Greeks with many gods, but, as Hall argues, countries such as Egypt could be both 'home of tyrants [...], [but also] of idealised people and harmonious relations with heaven'(p.149). Or another reason could be the fact that tragedians underplay their critique of the barbarians since for them it is more important to overplay the critique of another city. Thebes, for example, is a model of tyranny for some[459], synonymous with the myths of the house of Cadmus for all, or it is what Athens is not – the very idea of the Other whose existence justifies and refortifies what Athens is. In a captivating study[460], F. Zeitlin analyses the locus of Thebes as a concept of space, time, and tradition, focusing on the inescapable, destructive fate of those associating themselves with that city[461]. Lastly, specifically concerning Euripides, the reason could be his questioning, even rejecting, of his society's stereotypes and norms about the barbarian/Other, as he proved to do with the various choices of his life.

Euripides' Medea is not what would be called a purely virtuous barbarian; but the fact that she employs means of performance respected by the city in order to play her ambitious and catastrophic game of revenge shows Euripides' interpretation of the concept of Other: the Other becomes the insider who, in her controversial way, speaks, in a way, to the insiders about the fact that the city they have created cannot be destroyed by the others, but by themselves. In that sense, Euripides challenges the city, and Medea' s performing self in his *Medea* challenges Jason, the chorus, and the audience. Yet, what follows is not only an analysis of Medea's self in her dispute with

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[459] Plato, *Republic*, 9.57 I.B4,D3.

[460] F. Zeitlin, 'Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama' in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 130-167.

[461] Zeitlin refers mainly to *Oedipus* Rex, and *The Bacchae;* yet, as Rehm writes (*The Play of Space*), referring to other tragedies such as Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes*, Thebes can be seen as a 'useful mythical space in which Athenians could consider their own circumstances.'(p.238).

Jason, but also her *agon* with her self – as Euripides' complex interpretation of a woman's ambivalent performing self has been perceived by him.

That Medea is an extraordinary dramatic character, fierce and profound enough to be compared only to Clytaemnestra is not a matter solely discussed by classicists. That she is more tragic then Electra's eccentric mother is probably a point of discussion resolved fairly easily: she is violent and cunning, but she does not carry Clytaemnestra's violence in its expression of the most 'primitive past of the race, posed against' the values of the male-dominant democratic city[462]. Euripides moulds his female figure as eccentrically as all his theatrical craftiness allows him to do. Medea is not primitively violent, or insanely passionate: she is a woman ready for revenge because of her relation with Jason, but she is also a creature of multiple transformations, from foreign woman-lover, to city woman-man, to woman-mother, to woman-sufferer. It is almost as if Euripides' character is a synthesis of elements found in the Athenian city[463].

A comparison with Electra reveals that, besides the analogies in degrees of passion as a force of revenge and the final act of revenge they both display, Electra's argument to persuade her sister to participate in the assassination of Aegisthus is based partially on city fame and the others' opinion of them; Medea's argument for paying Jason back for the insult is that it is fully inconceivable for her to face the mockery of her enemies in the community, and that she has to defend hers. Presumably, both, Electra more mildly than Medea, resemble, as will be argued,

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[462] Bernard Knox, 'The Medea of Euripides', in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, pp. 272-293 (p. 273).

[463] *Medea's* first performance was in 431, the year of the beginning of the Peloponnesian war.

Ajax's[464] regard for community values, especially the idea of dishonour, while the apparent determination of both women toward their goals, again, is an additional cause of comparison among the three.

Still, Medea is extraordinary. Even if none of the many reasons existed to characterise her as such, the way she finally leaves the stage, riding on a chariot sent to her by Helios, her grandfather is no less than definitely one of ritualistic overtones – to say the least. And although this exit – as if all the rest is not enough – gives rise to a new spectrum of academic disagreement, in fact, it is the most appropriate one for her who belongs and does not belong in the city, who is the winner of her *agon,* but also the defeater of it in the long run, as she says[465].

Euripides draws a female character who is full of revenge *and* rational thought at the same time, antagonistic and competitive, highly ambiguous and conflicting, all in the range of the Athenian characteristics of performance. She is an individual-woman who can be also an individual-man, confidently in control of her *ergon*, but towards the end, she experiences emotions as a mother she has been unaware of before; but still, she carries on with her *ergon* as planned all along, yet not with the same consequences for her as planned before. Consequently, Medea's audience goes through an experience of metamorphosis too because, although they expect her to be a fierce, merciless executioner of her children – as she was with her other family victims until then – she, or rather Euripides, surprises (Knox, p.273) them, and leaves them in awe of her new presence literally rising in height and depth in front and above them at the end of the play.

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[464] Aristide Tessitore, 'Euripides Medea and the Problem of Spiritedness', in *Review of Politics* 53:4 (Fall, 1991), pp. 587-602 (p 595).

[465] Anne Pippin Burnett, 'Connubial Revenge: Euripides' Medea', in *Revenge in Attic and Later Tragedy*, pp. 193-224 (p. 218).

Indeed, the tragedy's audience attends to the deeds of a woman because of an oath, as sacred as any city oath, broken as it is by Jason, but active and sacred to her, the significance of which haunts Medea from the time she learns of Jason's intention to desert her and marry another woman. It is an oath taken by them both, as she says, as man and woman, equal to each other, in a ceremony of partnership equivalent to marriage, but of an oath unprecedented as such: oaths are related to public life[466], their significance is religious (Burnett, p. 199), and most important, no oaths exist between a bride and bridegroom, because it is the father who promises – with or without oaths – the bride to the bridegroom, and not the bride herself to the bridegroom under the city's norms (p. 202). In the case of these two characters, the father of Medea is Jason's enemy, and Medea plays the role of father for herself who finds now,

> herself thus cast aside, calls loudly on his oaths, invokes
> the mighty assurance of his sworn right hand, and calls the
> gods to witness the unjust return she is getting from Jason(21-23).

Medea's focuses on this oath, and plans her deeds based on codes of actions which begin out of her passion for Jason, and she finishes with the killing of his children so that he 'realizes her reasoning'[467]. But, as the main line of argument goes, her plans to kill the children as 'the only way for Jason to realise her reasoning' cause her to realize her own apocalyptic feelings of suffering over the killing, while, accordingly, her dispute with him converts into a repellent bond of a detached but shared pain. So, in a way, the oath between the two, or actually the ritual of the oath as she perceives it in its total significance, remains still actively fulfilled, and for the audience, it is this

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[466] Margaret Williamson, 'A Woman's Place in Euripides' Medea', in *Euripides, Women and Sexuality*, ed. by Anton Powell(London: Routledge, 1990), (pp. 16-31 (p. 18).
[467] Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 160.

oath, betrayed by Jason but sacred by itself, that justifies Medea's success and escape from punishment for her killing of her two children at the end[468].

Medea's *ergon* and *agon* is analysed here by defining first her perception of the Other: Jason, a friend turned into an enemy, as well as the other two male characters, Creon and Aegeus expose Medea's relation with the Other, while her *ergon* of revenge, verbal or actual, in private and in public, displays her ambiguities, her conflicting roles, and finally, the outcome of her viciously ambitious *ergon* of making Jason understand her reasoning. Eventually, she becomes a woman emotionally involved in her children's deaths, and a performing self the final action of whom has the qualities of a beginning of another dimension of hers, rather than the final dimension of her previous one.

Medea is not portrayed in the tragedy as a barbarian/witch – as a line of thought goes. It is true that, as the chorus says in the opening lines, she comes from Colchis, it is true that she mentions her murder of 'Pelias by the most horrible of deaths'(486), and that of her possessing poison (385). But neither the chorus nor any of the characters treat her as such, permitting, therefore, comments referring to the above epithets, and influential enough to still be cited: 'She has nearly all the features of the type – unrestrained excess in lamentation, a readiness to fawn on authority, the powers of magic, childlike surprise at falsehoods and broken promises'[469].

Euripides' character's behaviour does not imply any sexual desire of hers as some agree she has, thinking probably of Seneca's *Medea.* The only possible explanation

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[468] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), p.310. For the writer, the religious associations that oaths always imply are extremely important. As such, *Medea* 'would be a simpler, cruder tragedy, with an ending that, given Greek cultural assumptions, would have been nonsensical', but with the existence of the oath, the ending seems justifiable.

[469] D. L. Page, *Euripides' Medea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938; repr. 1967), p. 19.

for this last accusation originates from her words to Jason: 'it is clear that you are seized by longing for your new bride as you linger so long out of the palace!'(623). As to the poison, in tragedies such as *Hippolytus*, *Ion*, or Sophocles' *Trachiniae* these substances are in use by women. As for her 'lamentations, a readiness to fawn on authority, and childlike surprise at broken promises', when they do exist, they are not barbaric lamentations of a 'foreign princess' or surprises, but reactions to be found among women characters in a state of revenge. As for Medea, they are part of her identity of passion, and honour mainly in the process of confronting the Other, Jason – all part of the ambivalent way women are perceived by tragedians in their performance culture.

For Medea, Jason is no other than the man who, according to the nurse, has abandoned his children, who 'clashes with her' and 'will not find it easy to crow in victory'(44,45). Yet, before being this Jason, he was the one for whom 'her heart smitten with love'(8), for whom she 'abandoned [...] father, and [...] home'(483), murdered Pelias, came to a foreign land, and whose life she saved (476-486). Then, he became they, Jason and Medea bound with 'mighty oaths'(161) to each other, as husband and wife, he and their children being her home, or just him 'in whom all I had was bound up, as I well know'(228). And now she is just she, of 'no mother, no brother, no kinsman to shelter'(257). As seen, Medea, besides emphasising, through her sayings, that if it is not for the state or religious oaths which guarantee her union with Jason and protect her[470], she cannot count on any family member of hers to help her in her dispute with Jason, it is she who emphasises the monogamous institution of marriage – which the Greeks define by comparing it with 'the allegedly deviant forms

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[470] In one of Demosthenes's speeches (59.114), it becomes clear that, as Blundell assures, women could count on the state's support if they needed it. As Blundell expresses it, 'the state's protection was likely to prove effective in the Athenian courts' (p.121).

of relationships'(Hall, p.190) as they exist in other places; and it is Jason who brings up the subject of a new bride:

Although he admits her help to him – 'you did well' – he considers Aphrodite the saviour of his expedition (527), while for his present decision for a new bride, as he says:

> my purpose was that we should live well – which is the main thing – and not be in want, knowing that everyone goes out of his way to avoid a penniless friend. I wanted to raise the children in a manner befitting my house, […] so that by drawing the family into one I might prosper(559-565).

He goes on by calling his plan not bad, one that Medea would recognise as such if she were 'not galled by the matter of sex'(569), a matter women are so sensitive about that he would prefer if children were born 'from another source'(574). He assures her that it was not 'for the sake of a woman that' (594) he married, but to 'save' her, and he urges her to behave wisely, to forget her anger, and not to deny her friends (622).

Yet, above all, Jason, whether of the past or the present, is a Greek boasting of his Greekness and asking Medea to regard herself lucky for being here:

> You now live among Greeks and not barbarians, and you understand justice and the rule of law, with no concession to force. All the Greeks have learned that you are clever, and you have won renown. But if you lived at the world's edge, there would be no talk of you (536-541).

Jason's rhetoric is 'calm, objective and superior'[471]: he has broken, only partially, his alliance to her – since he still thinks of their own good – and, he decides alone, without her, his ex-partner, to redesign their relationship, seeing it as having the new status of two people who can benefit from his one-sided perception of new alliances and new blood ties, regardless of love, sex, and old oaths.

His superiority lies in his Greek origin, and through his Athenian rhetoric, he indicates that although he considers Medea a woman – and although women should not be born(574), he treats her as an ex-partner expecting from her to think and understand the benefits of his coming marriage. Jason reasons with her, instead of simply asking her to be silent, as the official city culture will ask her to be, and as, for example, in *Ajax*, Ajax asks Tecmessa, his son's mother, to be.

As such, on the one hand Jason, in accordance with the mixed rhetoric found in courts, generalises about women, and on the other, he treats her as equal, as a friend in a way – demonstrating thus one of the most important characteristics of the Grecks' self-identity, that of friendship[472] between different individuals, families, and here, genders.

Jason's treatment of Medea seems to be of a man who wants to exchange his thoughts rationally with her, and to explain his reasoning. And even if an objection to the above statement would suggest that Jason behaves this way because it is the only appeal he can think of, and the only way he can persuade her to approve of what he does, still, the other men's treatment of her, Creon's and Aegeus's is that of two who deal with another on equal terms regardless of the gender of their dialogue partner.

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[471] Eilhard Schlesinger, 'On Euripides' Medea', trans. by Walter Moskalew, in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, pp. 294-310 (p. 299).

[472] As Hall adds, the Athenians believed that friendships were not possible among barbarians who were harsh and uneducated enough to have constitutions which were not as democratic as theirs (p 194).

That these two are not as essential Others as Jason is to Medea is not a subject of dispute. Nor is it the fact that she needs them both to perform her plans; they are there for her to display her passionate reasoning against Jason, and to confront with them as if they are there for her to practice her rhetoric with them first, before her dispute with Jason.

First, when Creon asks Medea to leave Corinth, Medea asks him if she can stay one more day in order, he is told, to find the place she will go to with her children, but in reality, to arrange for the murder of the new bride. Creon, while listing the reasons why he asks her to leave, emphasises that he is afraid of her cleverness, and that a 'hot-tempered woman – and a hot-tempered man likewise – is easier to guard against than a clever woman who keeps her own counsel.'(319-321). And Aegeus, the second minor Other, promises to receive her in his house no less than in Athens as a suppliant, when she asks him to. He treats her with respect, trusts her, and obeys when asked by her to swear that he 'will never banish her'(749) from his land. Lastly, he declares: 'you have shown much prudence in your speech. Well, if you like, I do not object'(741,742).

Medea, as argued, in all three cases, in contrast to what it would be expected from a man to behave publicly towards a woman, is not treated by them as a non-equal, a barbarian, or a woman: they reason with her, and they expect her to reason back – behaving thus not in accordance with general views held about women, but with the views of an individual towards another individual – regardless of gender, or class rules – but taken into consideration the rules of friendship. And Medea counts on these rules in order to succeed with her plans of revenge.

By all means, Medea, besides being dangerous to her enemy, is also the clever individual confronting men's reasoning, men's notion of reasoning, men's mockery,

and their idea of *agon,* not in her *oikos* with her *oikos* members, but in the public space, that of Creon and Aegeus, that of her partnership with Jason, and that of her reputation as a clever, rational individual. She is in need of this social space in order to make Jason understand her passionate reasoning, in order to gain time for her plans, and in order to rescue herself after her dangerous plans. Those Other men define the social and public dimension she originally adopts when she follows Jason, the one with the oaths, the laws and the fame.

Medea, therefore, behaves in a passionate manner because Jason abandons her and she wants revenge, but she is also the member of the community with the speech of the community, the planner and the persuader of public life because she is part of the society of men. Her *ergon* and *agon* is a combination of actions because, besides taking social revenge as her oath commands her to do, she says, she needs to plan in order to find a new shelter and the new *ergon* they all expect Medea to accomplish; but no one imagines the degree of her accomplishing an *ergon*, not even herself.

Just like Electra, Medea, displays the state of her emotions, from inside her *oikos* making the nurse more than aware of her rage immediately identified as 'dangerous' resuming in a 'sinister plan'(35). The nurse describes her 'ceaseless weeping', her fasting, and her being 'deaf to the advice of her friends as a stone or a wave of the sea'(25), and she goes so far as to advise her children to stay away from their mother because she is seen to 'turn a savage glance at them as if she meant to do something to them'(92). The nurse actually warns everybody that 'flashes of still greater passion will soon set alight the cloud of lament now rising from its source'(106-108). Medea herself is heard singing her suffering with piercing, stentorian, almost pompous screams, her first words being against the 'accursed children of a hateful mother', 'may you perish with your father' (112-114). She pleads for death to come, but not

for long: her wailing becomes another curse against Jason and his bride: ' may [they] ground to destruction [...] so terrible are the unprovoked wrongs they dare to commit against me!'(163-165).

Loud, destructive, and direct is Medea's passion, even against her children because they are Jason's. Her words as heard from inside do not take more than sixteen lines , but they are more than enough to uncover Medea's anger turned into a curse, a 'savage glance', not just lament for her fate, but a curse for the others' fate. Her words make the nurse shrill and fear for the coming of an *ergon* of a woman intolerant of defeat, whose *ergon* is her *agon*, and whose survival is synonymous to her own victory: 'no one who clashes with her will find it easy to come in victory'.

It seems as if the nurse, instead of lamenting for Medea's misfortune, laments for Medea's enemy's misfortune. The nurse does not focus on her being an abandoned wife and mother, but on her being a loser or a winner, as if she an athlete of a game, or a lawyer who defends a case, as if she interprets Medea's screaming only partially as that of a hurt woman seeking revenge, and more as someone whose action of revenge is not a reaction to a negative emotional stimulus, but an action with its own momentum, autonomy, and energy, an action of a winner determined to affect the fate of others rather than allowing the others to affect her fate.

Medea is not a mourner of her fate the way Electra is, but unquestionably so, she is the mourner of Jason's betrayal of the oath, and as such, she comes out of the *oikos* displaying a skilful verbal defence different from the one inside *oikos*. As Williamson notes in her analysis of Medea's character, in contrast to her association with lyrical anapaests coming from inside (Williamson, p. 17), her language outside is 'intellectualising' (ibid.) resembling that of men's in courts, suggesting an 'egalitarian' rather than an 'hierarchical'(McClure, p. 279) relation with the other

men, Jason in particular. Her verbal *ergon* concentrates on winning the women's friendly feelings, on challenging and finding a place in the society of men (ibid.), on blaming and accusing Jason, so that her other *ergon*, her actual display of revenge takes place afterwards. Therefore, she employs various skills such as argument, abusive language used only by women during their festivals (374) such as in Thesmophoria, deception associated with men, and personal appeal. Actually, all these are her tools, her useful tools for winning her case of revenge against Jason, and it may be possible that Aristotle has some rhetorician like Medea in mind, when he says that he considers the rhetoric of the orator a tool (*'Art' of Rhetoric* 1355a21ff)), and he compares rhetoric with dialectic: both 'can be reduced to a system and thus called arts'; rhetoric though is 'useful and [...] its object is not persuasion in each case, just as is true of all the other arts' (*'Art' of Rhetoric* 1355a8ff). And in another part of the same discussion, he combines in a distinctive way the terms 'tool' and 'art' by focusing not on the speech itself but on the orators' hypocritical talents and vocal techniques, which, in Medea's case, are displayed in all their grandeur.

First, to the women of Corinth, she is most friendly, her main reason/plan being the 'favour' she asks from them: to keep her secret of punishing her husband if she 'finds any means'(260) to do so. Her eloquent and coherent speech concentrates on the reasons for her coming out 'lest you find fault with me'(215), and in order not to be accused of 'indifference to neighbours'(215). Then, and only in a parenthetical sort of way, she refers to her suffering, elaborating mostly on subjects such as 'justice in the eyes of mortals', and in her not praising 'the self-willed' citizen(223), establishing thus her public interests. She continues with a list of women's – 'our' – problems, and her perception of the misfortunes of marriage (230-245), without, however, presenting the women as passive beings; her use of active language – 'we must buy',

'a woman comes', 'we have spent great efforts' – implies a perception of them more as active participants rather than victims. And she adds:

> Men say that we live a life free from danger at home while they fight with the spear. How wrong they are! I would rather stand three times with the shield in battle than give birth[473] once.(248-251)

In the last part of the speech, she chooses to remind the women that 'their story' is different from hers – since she is without a city – and that 'no mind is more murderous' than a woman's 'injured in love'(265-266).

To Creon, she presents a cautious and humble profile because her plan is not to let him suspect her of harming her daughter, and also because she needs time to plan her revenge; but as she afterwards confesses to the chorus: 'Do you think I would ever have fawned on this man unless I stood to gain, unless I were plotting?'(368-369). As she says, cleverness does not work for a 'man's' – not a woman's – benefit: 'no man who is sensible ought ever to have his children educated beyond the common run'(294-295), and she soothes (316) him when saying that she has no evil thoughts against his daughter. Creon's answer that 'his children' are 'dearest' to him (329), works as Medea's ultimate appeal for convincing him to stay one more day for the benefit of *her* children:

> Have pity on them.
> You too are a parent: it would be natural for you to show
> kindness toward them. I do not care if I myself go into exile
> It is their experience of misfortune I weep for (344-347).

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[473] Women in Athens were getting married very young, and hygienic conditions were certainly not the best possible, particularly during childbirth. Consequently, many women died during childbirth, but the exact numbers are not known (Blundell,p.110).

To Aegeus, her *ergon*/plan is to come as a 'suppliant' first, but the minute she hears of his need for the heirs he is not able to have, she offers fertility in order to gain an *oikos* in Athens (Williamson, p. 19). Their exchange is an act of trust between two equals – a man and a woman, as if they were partners – and she asks Aegeus to take an oath so that he 'will not give' her to Creon and Jason when they come to take her out of the country.

Finally, to Jason, during the two of their three *agones*, she applies all her verbal skills together, in a unique combination of blame discourse, suppliant's terminology, irony, argument, emotional appeal and self-abusive language.

In their first dialogue, she uses abusive language and irony to show her justified emotions of outrage and despair, and to blame Jason for her past, present and future misfortunes. She inveighs against him, the 'vilest of knaves', the person of 'unmanly conduct, 'worst enemy', shameful, 'wicked' and 'knave'(463-498), while she sarcastically points at him, her 'wonderful and faithful husband!'(510), who is urged by her to go and play the bridegroom(625). Their first encounter ends with her long and skilful presentation of the deeds she performed for his sake, and her refusal to accept any help from his friends.

In their second *agon* – with a Medea behaving as an agreeable wife – her speech is clearly deceptive: it includes her persuading Jason that she is a supporter of his marriage, and him allowing, therefore, the children to approach the bride with their mother's supposed gifts, the instruments of her murder of Creon's daughter. She deceives him by playing superbly the double role of the inquirer and the replier of her own dialogue, and concluding that she should support his plans:

> Foolish creature, why am I
>
> raving and fighting those who arrange things for the best?

> […] Shall I not cease from my wrath when gods are being
>
> so kind?' […] Those reflections have made me realize that
>
> I was being foolish and was being angry for nothing. […]
>
> I ought to be sharing in your plans.(873-886)

She continues playing the agreeable wife, and as all women 'we are, I will not say bad creatures, but we are what we are'(889-890). Her final verbal act includes her reconciliation with Jason, and her driving their children by hand to 'join your [sic] mother in making an end to our [sic] former hostility against one dear' to them (896-897).

This is Medea, the deceiver, the actor, the citizen of non-city, the rhetorician – and of all these metamorphoses of identities before her major one, that of the avenger/*infanticida*. And even if the audience was not aware of the entire plot of the tragedy, and even if the audience was not familiar with the character of Medea, her verbal *ergon* could have been by itself more than ample to make them think of her performing the unthinkable act, an *ergon* only Medea could have thought out and acted upon.

And indeed she does act on it. Besides killing the bride-to-be and Creon, Medea performs the inconceivable act of killing her own children – in an act of sacrificing them – because they are Jason's. The infanticide is the *ergon* she identifies with, the one that will make her a winner in her clash with Jason.

Medea makes her decision to kill her children (792) – or she decides to pronounce her decision – after her victorious verbal *agones* with the chorus, Creon and Aegeus, when she secures the success of some of her plans. Much earlier (375), after her dialogue with Creon, she speaks about making three corpses, Creon's, 'his daughter,

and my husband', therefore, it appears that she 'revises' (Gill, p. 155) her vengeance-plan afterwards.

But does she change her mind? And why does she decide not to kill Jason? The answer to the second question is given by her when she is asked by the chorus whether she 'will bring' herself to kill her 'own offspring'(815): 'It is the way to hurt my husband most'(816). To which, the chorus replies with the obvious answer 'and for yourself to become the most wretched of women'(818). Their clear answer, stressing the effect of her act on herself as a mother, is the only legitimate one for the chorus, or for anyone, for that matter. But not for Medea whose killing of the children underlines, once more, her powerful actions in a series of stimuli and actions, and of a series of actions which become stimuli, to such an extent, that the complexity of challenges in Medea's character make some critics declare that Euripides' characters are not psychologically consistent (Schlesinger, p. 296). This point of psychological inconsistency is probably justified, but one does not have to agree with it. Does she change her mind? Has she really thought of killing Jason? And why does she kill her own children?

It seems that Medea does not change her mind. When she mentions the three corpses, she has not made any final decisions yet: she is still planning, wondering, speculating, and considering ways to hurt her enemies. She knows she will take revenge, she says so, but, as a careful planner of everything she says and does, she leaves all the possibilities open. Characteristically so, right after her mention of the three corpses, she is wondering what the best way to kill her enemies might be. Besides, although she consistently refers to the reasons why she wants to hurt Jason, this is the first and last time she mentions killing him. Lastly, she could not reveal all of her plans to the chorus so early because, it appears, Medea aims to exhaust all her

ways – by gaining time, by exposing her misfortunes, her enemies, and Jason's character – so that the chorus will be on her side and not betray her when she finally reveals her plan, even if they will be horrified by her act and not approve of it.

A further point of what is asserted in this analysis is that Medea's decision to kill her children – therefore making their fate synonymous with her wrath and with her eventual revenge – is hinted at by Euripides continuously: the reference to them occurs very early in the plot, while the theme of children appears persistently to be of high importance in her dialogues with Creon and Aegeus. First, the silent image of the children – unfailing, even alarming, almost like a shadow of their mother's presence – occurs in one of the nurse's introductory lines (36) when she announces that Medea takes 'no joy in looking at them', next to the sentence 'I am afraid she will hatch some sinister plan'. Medea herself is heard cursing them right at the beginning of her sighing from inside, as if they are responsible for their father's behaviour, while the idea of birth is for her worse than going to war. Furthermore, as already mentioned, Creon's remark that he adores his children is used by Medea to make him understand that the children mean the most to her, too, and therefore, he should allow her to stay for another day in Corinth so that she can make arrangements for them. In Aegeus's case, it is because of his desperate wish to have children that Medea secures herself a place to stay after committing her crimes, since she promises to help him solve his problem. Consequently, it is more than accurate for Schlesinger to assert that these two dialogues, as well as Jason's statement that he marries the king's daughter because he is concerned about his children's future (562), make her decide that her most effective revenge against Jason, personally and socially, is to kill his children (Schlesinger, p. 305).

The children are the 'most concrete expression of the interlocking of their lives' (Gill, p. 160) – Jason's and Medea's – and she passionately perceives them as her ultimate weapon to make Jason understand the pain his betrayal has caused her. It is as if her decision is expressed every moment, in all moments that she makes remarks about the oath they shared, and Jason's breaking of that oath. In a way, she does not have to refer to the children, since she refers to the oath – the 'interlocking of their lives' – and the children are nothing more than the living 'expression' of this interlocking.

Medea perceives that, as a woman, her only weapon against Jason is her children. True, men consider her their equal in the way they reason with her; true, she is a survivor; true, she is capable of finding a shelter; and true, she can defend her arguments as a rhetorician. Yet, she is a woman in a man's society where the men make the laws, govern, and decide her fate. And *this,* she cannot change. What she *can* change is the only *topos* she has power in: the *oikos* of Jason – through his children. They are the ones who inherit the family titles, and they are left behind to 'tend the family grave and make sacrifices on behalf of the deceased and his forebears' (Blundell, p.117). And every man's *oikos* will continue to exist with the presence of children, along with the other *oikoi*, to maintain the wealth of the state. Jason, along with Creon and Aegeus, all relate their existence and plans with children, and Medea, the woman in men's society, perceives the anomalous idea of sacrificing the children to correspond/communicate with the men the idea of unity between two individuals, as sacred and valuable as the existence of children in their *oikos* and in their state.

Medea herself presents various reasons for her decision to kill them. Right after the announcement of it, she says: 'there is no one who can rescue them'(793)

implying that since they are the ones who deliver their mother's deadly gifts to the bride, eventually, they will be punished. The same reason she repeats before she kills them: 'I must not, by lingering, deliver my children for murder to a less kindly hand'(1239). Yet, two reasons among all the others prevail: her sense of pride, and her passion for revenge. More than once, she stresses the fact that she cannot be mocked by enemies(792), including Jason in her enemies (1362), and she cannot be thought of as weak (807;1245). In fact, her references to her enemies and their mocking are more than the ones to the pain she will cause to Jason; she says to him: 'you were not going to cast aside my bed and then spend a pleasant life laughing at me'(1354), and later: 'but the children are dead; this will wound you to the quick'(1370).

Actually, one can assume that Medea appears to be both, a passionate avenger and a passionate advocate of what she must do for her reputation, and unnecessarily so, this combination of elements has caused a series of dilemmas for scholars as to which of the two – her sense of pride or her sense of revenge – is the strongest one for the infanticide. Yet, does there have to be a separate line between the two for a performer such as Medea? Can her decision be seen as a combination of 'revenge *and* inevitability' (Schlesinger, p. 297) at the same time? The children's death is 'inevitable because it is a necessary part of her vengeance against Jason'(ibid.), and these two stimuli cannot be separated, but only interconnected. A further point of this interconnection between opposing elements – or ambiguities – in Medea is shown by her use of the words *bouleumata* and *thymos* which are usually associated with the terms, reason for the first, and passion for the second. In Medea's case, in her long monologue (1019-1080), when she finalises her decision for the infanticide, *bouleumata* in line 1044, according to the text, is her word for her revenge plans, but

later, the same word, in line 1079, is used by her to indicate her thoughts of opposing to her revenge (Schlesinger, p. 294-5).

Euripides' female character is totally consistent with the phenomenological inconsistencies and ambiguities which are her indispensable elements from the moment her stentorian shouting heard from inside the house converts into a rhetorician's eloquent speech when she confronts the women of Corinth outside her *oikos*. And then, in those first moments of her public appearance, with her 'we women' – generous and fraudulent at the same time – she lists the women's problems in the household, but as it turns out, none of her descriptions applies to her and her marriage of oaths and sacrifices. And later, how does she assume she represents all women when pronouncing her own – not their – preference for going to war rather than going through childbirth? Again, she is 'we', but Medea is not like any of the women of Corinth she has in mind; she is a rhetorician who formulates the words as if she is a woman like them.

Her major *ergon*, however, the infanticide itself, exposes not only the extent of her ambiguities, or the extent of the interconnection between pathos and reason, but it exposes another dimension of her ambiguities: regardless of the legitimate reasons she uses to justify the killing of her own children, this act equalises her with Jason far more than she would ever be aware of. She accuses Jason of betrayal and of breaking the oath, or the sacred bond between the two – she never specifies the nature of this oath – but she, before Jason, has broken not only the sacred bonds with her family, but with her country, as well – one of the most sacred bonds, especially for the Athenian audience and their sacred obsession with their Athena's land.

Indeed, Medea does not perceive the idea of bonds with her country or family the way the others do, or actually, the way the Athenians perceive their bonds with their

city and homeland. Creon, as mentioned, describes his love for his fatherland as second only to his children, stressing, therefore, the sacredness of the bond, as sacred as that between parents and children, or husband and wife. Not even Jason, her enemy, performs an act of betrayal towards his fatherland. But Medea does: 'To my father's house [...] I betrayed for your sake [...] to my own kin I have become an enemy'(503-506).

Furthermore, although she accuses (567) Jason of designing one-sided plans – *bouleumata* – she becomes the ultimate designer of one-sided plans (772, 886, 893, 1044) by designing not only the breaking of an oath, but the killing of an oath, and the sacrifice of a blood bond.

Her major *ergon*, the infanticide itself, exposes not only the extent of her ambiguities, not only the extent of the interconnection between pathos and reason, not only her equivalence with Jason, but another dimension of Medea's polymorphous self – tragic, ironic, deceptive, apocalyptically plain and simple – that not even Medea, the grand performer, manipulator, and designer would have ever imagined existed: the dimension of her identity as a mother, an identity that Euripides, the performer, demonstrates exists the moment no one would have imagined – in accordance with Medea. Indeed, with all the confidence she draws from the success of her previous elaborate deeds, with all the certainty of her passion of revenge and her sense of pride, with all her careful consideration of her plan, and all her hatred toward Jason, Medea's performing self shows – and thinks she knows – that she is in control of her *ergon*, her *agon* and, therefore, her self. As such, as always before, she displays her control and confidence in the killing of her children until the moment she speaks to them about their future lives – as far as line 902 in the text. From then on, until line 1250, Media questions her heart, searches her heart, urges her heart not to

weaken (1246), but to 'take the sword and go to your [*sic*] life's miserable goal!'(1246). And after her monologue-dialogue (1020-1080) which some call 'interior monologue'[474], and others see as a representation of 'a crucial stage in the historic-cultural development of the idea of the self-conscious "I"'[475], Euripides' audience may still be alert to wondering what comes next of Medea's shockingly unexpected self.

Yes, Euripides' performer is tragic because she has to deal with two confronting roles: of being the mother of her children, and the mechanical operator of her plans to kill her children. Never before has she visualized herself as a 'non-mechanical' (Burnett, p. 206), non-controlled performer whose task, up to now, has been to finalise a violent act/crime, mostly the result of her passionate love for Jason. The cleverness and the cunning which drove her actions, in combination with her identity as a passionate lover were enough to make her an executioner, more than ready to persuade herself that her actions were justified and, consequently, her victims were simply objects of her major *ergon*, that of either revenge or of assistance to Jason. Now, however, Medea faces, not an exterior Other – Creon, Aegeus, or even Jason – but an interior Other, another non-mechanical, non-controlled power, almost like an unknown enemy, which resists her daemonic, old, known power (ibid.), resists her *ergon* of revenge, resists her passion for or against Jason, resists what is known to her up to now. Medea has to deal now with her being a mother of her children, and therefore, she has to deal with a force in clash with the other force, her passion of revenge. Medea, as it turns out, has to deal with her being a mother as well as an avenger.

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[474] Thalia Papadopoulou, 'The Presentation of the Inner Self: Euripides' Medea 1021-55 and Apollonius Rhodius' Argonatica 3, 772-801, in *Mnemosyne* 1:6 (1997), pp. 641-665 (p. 645).
[475] Bruno Snell, *Scenes From Greek Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 52.

Critics dealing with her esoteric conflict and dilemma point openly to the resemblance between her conflict and that of Ajax's as presented in his monologues, but they instantly seem eager to add that Ajax has to face mostly external factors such as Tecmessa and the chorus (Papadopoulou, p. 644). Nevertheless, both Ajax and Medea are drawn by Sophocles and Euripides according to the Heraclitus's dictum *ethos anthropo daimon*, as characters whose 'motivation forces them to adhere to a decision which is bound to lead to destruction' (p.644) since one's character is one's fate/*daimon*. At the same time, both tragedians employ ways of expressing the conflict, mainly through long monologues, like Antigone's, with short intervening question-form sentences; but particularly in Medea, Euripides surpasses Sophocles' techniques of revealing the character's internal *agon*/agony by 'exploiting the potentialities of Sophoclean means in the most effective way' (p. 644) – by verbalising and revealing the esoteric *agon* of his character, as if he designs internal, electrifying forces in the shape of Medea's words.

The first sign of Medea-mother who regards the children as hers – not only his – and expresses her bond with them is during the faked reconciliation among the four she plans, so that Jason will let the children deliver her gifts to his bride. It should be said that most classicists devote their attention to Medea's monologue (1020-1080), yet the lines of this earlier scene work as a miniature indication of her later major conflict. First, she starts wondering about their future 'Ah, how I think of something the future keeps hid!', and suddenly, her previous coherent sentences, with their conventional beginnings and endings, become short and disconnected: the sentence about her children's future is followed by pity for herself – 'Unhappy me!' – continues with a reference to 'how prone' she is to tears, and then once more, she returns to her reconciliation with Jason: 'And as I now at long last make up the

quarrel with your father'(899-904). Even Jason notices her 'pale tears' and her depressed mood, but Medea quickly dismisses his remark: 'It is nothing', avoiding making him a participant in her grief, but adding later, that she worries about them since she 'gave them birth'(930).

She is not the elaborate, coherent dealer in control of her words when in public, and the powerful organiser – as actually she proves to be afterwards(932-975). She is the Medea of the birth of her children, of the future of a childless woman who momentarily, through soft-sounding words such as 'dear'(hands), 'tender'(eyes), 'pale'(tears), expresses sweet and painful emotions for her children. But she seems to disregard this awareness the minute she starts plotting again, as if this minor palinode of hers in her expression of her identity as a mother is not as dominant as her other feelings of revenge are, and her old role as a betrayed partner.

The time Medea expresses palinode, unprecedented in her previous performance, is after the tutor's report that the bride was happy to receive her gifts from the children, therefore Medea knows that the consequences of her actions, not just of her words, are about to affect her and her children, and she has to deal with her plans. Her monologue is no less than the total, unconditional, unveiling display of her esoteric *agon*, with her declaring at the end of it that her *thymos* 'overbears' her *bouleumata* (calculation).

From line 1021 to 1082, one moment she laments her future without her children, the next refuses to go ahead with her plans because of her love for her children, only to return to her original plans two sentences later. Her words are in conflict with themselves and their meaning, as if their function is to float around for the sake of coming back, tormenting the woman, the mother, and the avenger. Medea starts with the assumption that she and her children will be separated, but the 'home' of the

children is an ambiguous term: it seems as if she refers to Corinth because, next to 'home' she pronounces 'city', while she will go to 'another land as an exile'; but then, after grieving for the fact that she raised them in vain since they will not 'tend' her in old age and dress her 'for burial', she speculates that they 'will no longer see' their mother 'with loving eyes but pass into another manner of life' suggesting, most certainly, their passing into the state of Hades. Her long and coherent sentences declare her firm dedication to her initial plans, and her control of the situation: she grieves because, in her mind, she has already done the killing of them.

The children, until now, are the objects of her actions, but then, when she turns and looks at them, Medea is not the old Medea. At that very moment, she sees them as subjects – her subjects, her feelings – and she no longer bears their 'glance': 'Why do you smile at me?', she asks them, herself and her courage, and her 'Alas' is a cry or a farewell to her plans: 'What am I to do? [...] I cannot do it'. 'I shall not: farewell my designs!' The sentences are not long anymore, but incredibly short, switching from active to passive voice, from present, to past, to future tense, in question form or an answer to questions, with Medea trying to regain her old courage and certainty.

For some critics, Medea does not show any true hesitations, and she only thinks of what she 'might have done', 'had her *daimon* been otherwise' and not Medea herself[476]. But since Medea does not change, critics declare, Euripides' only purpose is to raise the audience's sympathy towards her[477]. But is this the case? Barlow is correct when he claims that Medea's 'honesty of feelings' are more than certain (Papadopoulou, p. 653), and although it is true that her hesitant moments are not as

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[476] Shirley A. Barlow, 'Stereotype and Reversal in Euripides' Medea', *Greece and Rome 36* (1989), pp. 168-171, (p. 167), as cited in Papadopoulou, 'The Presentation of Inner Self: Euripides' Medea', p. 653.

[477] P. Pucci, *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 141.

long as the other confident lines with which she establishes her identity as an *infanticida* – had she been absolutely honest with her feelings the way critics want her to be – would she express her honesty of feelings differently? Since Euripides' dramatic techniques create, as everybody agrees, an intensity and sequence of confusing feelings, as well as agonizing instances, the spectator cannot assume that Medea is faking. She does not fake more than anybody else who goes through intensive moments, profound enough to be remembered as such, and to ever affect feelings, and Medea, from now on shows that these moments of her agony/*agon* haunt her. Actually, neither would Medea have been Medea without these electrifying, sharp moments of esoteric conflict, nor would Euripides have been Euripides without his agonistic Medea.

In the next lines, she appears not willing to submit to her emotional dilemmas, letting her old rational identity take over and terminate her esoteric turmoil: 'But what is coming over me? Do I wish to suffer mockery? […] I shall not weaken my hand', and before admitting her total surrender to her wrath, she admits: 'I can no longer look at you {her children} but am overwhelmed with my pain. And I know well what pain I am about to undergo'.

Medea's conflict between her being a mother and her being a socially and individually betrayed partner begins with the scene of her fake reconciliation with Jason, reaches its peak during her monologue, and fades away right before her infanticide (1236-1250):

> Why do I put off doing the terrible
>
> deed that must be done? Come, luckless hand, take the
>
> sword, […] . Do not weaken, do not remember that you
>
> love the children, that you gave them life. […]

Oh! What an unhappy woman I am! (1242-1250)

Medea, therefore, performs her deed, just as she has performed her other deeds before, and just as in all other cases, she is again the winner and the triumphant operator of her *erga*. She is the portrait of a self in all the spectrum of a repeated, remade, re-performed performance as acted before. Why then does Medea leave the stage on a chariot, detached, and untouched by anybody? Does Euripides emphasise her intact performing elements, or her newly acclaimed motherly ones? Or is it simply a Medea ending?

Aristotle's finding fault with Medea's going off on the chariot of Helios (*Poetics*, 1454b1) is followed by critics who, either avoid elaborating on the subject, or express their perplexity. The ones who try to explain it compare the ending with the ones by Artemis in *Hippolytus*, of Dioscure in *Electra*, of Dionysus in *Bacchae*, seeing thus Medea's reaching a divine state[478] away from the violence of the human level. Knox points to her use of imperatives 'which recur in the pronouncements of the gods from the machine'(281): She shouts at Jason: 'Cease your toil. […]speak if you like.' […]'Go home! Bury your wife.'(1319,1394). Schlesinger's analysis is in agreement with Strohm's discussion who sees the end as Medea's triumph in contrast to her former confrontations with Jason in which he was in control of the situation. In the *exodos*, Medea is in control, but as Schlesinger concludes his study on her, 'Medea, the woman is dead'(310). Burnett's line of thought concludes with the statement that what remains in Medea is 'only hatred and triumph' for Jason and his *hybris* to marry somebody else; her going on the chariot underlines her forcing him to see his *hybris*(217-19).

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[478] Gill, 'Personality in Greek Epic', p. 171; Knox, 'The Medea of Euripides', p. 280.

Perceiving Medea's analysis from the very beginning to the end of the play, and adding rather than simply refuting all the previous comments, it seems that her exit is the most appropriate, last act of Medea. The ritual of the oath, as it started with the ceremony between two friends, continued with the children's sacrifice, and ended with her exit on a god's chariot may be perceived as one associated only with Medea. As she says to Jason at the end: 'What god or power above will listen to you, who broke your oath [...]?'(1391-92). Helios, the custodian of oaths and secret wrongs according to Homer (*Iliad*,3.277-88, 3.277-80, *Odyssey,*8.302) protects her all along. Through the god's chariot and Medea's elevating stage, the oath exists not in its civil and divine dimension, but its absolute, divine one, being above Jason, showing to him its authoritarian power, and the respect he should have towards it.

Additionally, Medea's taking off displays not only the end of her ritual in a most ceremonious way, but also her entering her role as a mother. In the last verbal, hostile and triumphant *agon* with Jason, she repeats her reasoning for the infanticide – 'the children are dead: this will wound you to the quick'(1370) – yet, at the same time, she admits her pain when Jason says that she will share his 'misfortune': 'Of course, but the pain is worthwhile if you cannot mock me'(1362). Her deed for now is to bury the children with her 'own hand' so that nobody 'outrage them by tearing up their graves'(1380).

Thus, she is closer than ever before to her children, and she experiences a bond of blood and holy ties with the land where the children are going to be buried, a homeland for her she never owned before. Her elevated position signifies the end of her *agon/ergon,* she, the 'she-lion', planned now, but will 'mourn hereafter'(1249).

'Mourn hereafter' are Medea's words to herself, to Jason and the spectators, who follow in awe Medea's multi-level performance, from inside her *oikos* to her final semi-divine position – but to what extent can they follow her? To what extent can they identify with her? Or to what extent can they communicate with her? In his analysis of the communication between the spectators and the characters on stage, Aristotle argues about the effect of the characters on the spectators, and perhaps at this point, after Medea's *exodos*, it would probably be quite appropriate to try to analyse his assertions in order to interpret the level of communication between the individuals of the audience with the individual character on stage, between the tragedian and the audience, and therefore, between the performing selves on and off stage.

More specifically, for Aristotle, tragedy, along with poetry and other forms of art, is imitation – but the tragedian of Aristotle's imitation[479]– unlike the historian – employs imagination to write about what may happen, not about what does happens, and therefore, he creates an imaginative, intellectual reality from which the tragedian synthesises the tragedy (*Poetics* I, 51b5). In that sense, since the tragedian employs his intellect, Aristotle considers reality as created by the tragedian capable of teaching human beings because that is how 'representations work: people delight in seeing images, because it comes about that they learn as they observe'(I 48b15).

Referring to the effect of tragedy now, Aristotle introduces the cathartic effect of tragedy which, one might add, is one of the most contentious and ambiguous points in his *Poetics*[480], and yet one which is hotly debated. He writes that 'we delight in looking at [...] images [...] we see with pain'(48b11), that tragedy's 'elements [...] [represent] 'people acting and not by narration; accomplishing by means of pity and

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[479] Aristotle departs from Plato's theory of ideas which is perceived only through the intellect, and he, principally as a physicist and analyst of the world of senses, perceives the world through the senses first. As in the case of Plato, his idea of imitation are already discussed.

[480] As a whole, the *Poetics* includes many cryptic assertions which have given rise to a number of interpretations which are, to a large extent, speculations on what Aristotle means.

fear the catharsis of such emotions'(49b25-27); and also that 'since the poet should use representation to produce the pleasure [arising] from pity and fear, it is obvious that this must be put into the incident.'(53b10-15)

The first remark is to note that Aristotle focuses on the plot of tragedy to point to the incidents of the plot and the pity and fear they might create for the audience – but his statements seem to embrace also the characters. And taking into consideration the fact that he also mentions the 'spectacle' of the tragedy (61b16), it seems that Aristotle's comments on the effects of tragedy refer to the involvement of the senses and emotions, to the fact that they bring a kind of 'emotional purgation in a manner similar to psychodrama, and parallel to ritual'(Taxidou, p.113).

But it is quite possible that catharsis, as he thinks of it, offers a kind of social safety valve since the spectators do not feel pain for what happens to them, but for what happens to those on stage; therefore, their emotions are under control, and as such are harmless: if these emotions were released, they would have probably been harmful for the individual and the society (Janko, p.xx). Another explanation of the catharsis may refer to 'an intellectual component that implies alienation and results in scepticism rather than reconciliation' as Taxidou writes (p.114).

Of the many assertions on the subject, the following by two experts on Aristotle, discussing the effect of catharsis on the audience, and arrive, essentially, at the same conclusions. First, Jonathan Lear refers to spectators who watch and admire, as well as pity the tragic characters, and put themselves 'imaginatively in a position in which there is nothing further to fear. There is consolation in realizing that one has experienced the worst, there is nothing further to fear, and yet the world remains a rational […] place' where an individual belongs and where the 'goodness of man is

reaffirmed'[481]. And for Aryeh Kosman 'through the ritualized [...] action, we as audience [...] participate in the restorative capacities of [...] society to forgive and [...] heal the guilty sufferers.' And he continues by saying that since the audience is in a position to identify with a tragic character and do so 'by the very fear and pity' the audience experiences at the 'witnessing' of the character's fate, 'and which is the occasion of his theatrical purification', the audience is 'relieved of the more general aspects of [...] fear at the possibility of that identification' with that particular character'[482]. As it seems then, and as most experts agree, the notion of catharsis as perceived by Aristotle unifies the tragedian with the actor and the spectator, and emphasises the emotional, social, even political communication among the three, and the dependence of the one on the other – as if the one does not exist without the other in the city spectrum.

It is most possible then, to return to Medea and the effect of her performance on the audience, that the spectators follow Medea's acts, and communicate with her feeling of despair, of revenge, or her grasping an oath, and that they experience a cathartic feeling by watching her sharing with them the amount of harm – if harm is the right word – caused to her offspring and eventually to herself.

And they also follow Medea the barbarian princess, the cursing partner, the speaker of women, the cunning planner, the killer of her children, Helios' grand daughter – and yet, what is left from all these identities is probably just the very last one: the mother in her ever lasting ritual of mourning for her children, the only one responsible for their burying. And, in the same way as Electra, Medea, in all her

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[481] Jonathan Lear, 'Katharsis', in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. by Amelie Okzenberg Rorty (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 315-40, p. 335.

[482] Aryeh Kosman, 'Silence and Imitation in the Platonic Dialogues', in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and his Dialogues* (Supplementary Volume to *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)), pp. 73-92, p. 78.

extraordinary verbal and visual performance, emerges out of the Athenian culture of a highly ritualistic *agon* against the male Other she chooses to compete with.

To epitomise, therefore, the analysis of Medea's character, her decision to initiate a plan of revenge against Jason reveals the own Other self she was not aware of, a self of dilemmas she never thought she would have; and as such, the end of the play, with her new self taking the place of the old Medea is as apocalyptic to her as it is to the spectators.

Euripides' Medea, unlike Sophocles' Electra, dares challenging the city spectrum, but mostly, Euripides' presentation of the reversal of roles – of a barbarian who acts as an Athenian, and a woman who behaves as a man – raises, through a woman's voice, the subject of Athenian identity[483] to the audience – a subject of another of his tragedies *Ion*. A slave turns out to be a prince but he is afraid of coming to Athens because, as he says, he wouldn't know what to do: if he decided to participate in politics, the others would hate him; if he decided to stay away, the others wouldn't like a man with no influence (594-606). The tragedy of *Medea* seems to be another of these tragedies which activate questions about the much privileged Athenian city identity which Euripides, unlike Sophocles, decided to leave behind during his last years.

II. Performance in the Community

Sophocles' *Ajax*[484]

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[483] Rehm in *Radical Theatre*, refers to the 'identity politics' of the Greek tragedy. p.110

[484] Sophocles, 'Ajax', ed. and trans. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, in *Sophocles I: Ajax; Electra; Oedipus Tyrannus*, Loeb Classical Library 20 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 27-163.

Ajax, the son of Telamon from Salamis, one of the most valiant of the Greeks at Troy, is outraged with the unanimous decision of the leaders to award Odysseus, his rival, Achilles' armour. He plans revenge, but all he manages to do – under the influence of Athena who protects Odysseus – is to massacre a herd of sheep and cattle, an action he is shameful of, which eventually leads to his suicide. His friends, wife and son witness his downfall, but it is Odysseus – with Ajax' half-brother Teucer – who secures for him a burial equal to his status.

In the previous section, Electra and Medea demonstrated the connections between Athenian society and tragedy, the differences between Sophocles' and Euripides' perception of women's roles, voices, and displaying of emotions, as well as Electra's and Medea's common characteristics as performing selves. In this unit, the analysis of Ajax and Hippolytus aims to demonstrate another gamut of dimensions of the performing self, perhaps not as ambivalent as the ones in connection with women, but one connected with men's agency – or two representative types of men's agency – according to Sophocles and Euripides, in their involvement with the community. Men's performance is mostly geared toward actions linked to the community's acceptance of them, and unlike women, their verbal display of feelings and choices is rather limited, while their position in society is usually not at stake.

Still, Sophocles' and Euripides' perception of men's performance contains fundamental differences which the characters of Ajax and Hippolytus, more than other male characters of the two tragedians, demonstrate. Specifically, Sophocles deals with an archaic hero/warrior, while Euripides with an adolescent *apragmon*,

both representing two distinctive, dominant, rather contradictory roles of the Athenian society – one a respected role connected with the common Greek past, and the other connected with the Athenian present of youngsters in their role of revolting against old values and roles. Yet, what brings the two characters close is the fact that the artistic expression of both tragedians creates two men who, with their actions and choices, come into conflict with the society without however being rejected by the others, or the society as a whole.

Ajax and Hippolytus demonstrate the male performing selves who connect the past with the present, the heroic with the anti-heroic, the idea of the city as both an enemy and a reconciler, and furthermore, they themselves connect the idea of human agency in a community of human agents – whether their names are Ajax or Hippolytus, whether they are written by Sophocles or Euripides. In that sense, their employment here demonstrates the performance of individuals who, although they are not in complete accordance with city norms, seek justification for themselves by the city and in the city, and the city does not refuse it to them. But beyond any similarities, the analysis of the warrior and the adolescent verifies the differences between Sophocles and Euripides in their treatment of men's performance in the community in terms of roles, relation with their family, involvement of gods, and outcome of the conflict between the character and the community.

As far as *Ajax* is concerned now, the play unfolds a character who, as actually has been said of him, seems dislocated in Athenian society: 'with fierce demands of his [...] individualism, his [...] commitment to his [...] own needs and demands in the face of society or social pressure, is scarcely a figure who would sit easily in

democratic ideology'[485]. Yet, are his demands those of his individualism, or the demands of a warrior the others in his own community refused 'to honour'(98) even though he had saved in battle someone such as Agamemnon 'when fire was blazing'(1275-78), and when no one else was going against Hector? Ajax fought for the others, and according to Odysseus, he is a 'valiant' man second only to Achilles who should not be dishonoured because then the laws of gods would be destroyed (1340-44) – as Demosthenes would have said in an Athenian court. Also, it is the Athenian city which values heroes/warriors such as Ajax, and it is Athens the city of both, democratic *and* divine laws alike, a society which adopts and receives a number of diversified individuals, and assimilates them all, old heroes and new, democrats and oligarchs, married women and *hetaerae*, all part of the Athenian past and present, all part of the performance culture.

Ajax's legitimate position in the Athenian ideology is also emphasised by the fact that he was one of the heroes of the ten tribes of Athens, and his son Eurysaces was the ancestor of aristocratic Athenians (Plut., *Solon*, 10), while his *oikos* – consisting of Tecmessa, a concubine (*pallacis*), and their son – is an amalgam of an Homeric and Athenian *oikos*. Concubines[486] are met in the scenes of *Iliad*[487], and in Athens, usually next to upper class men (Plut., *Alcibiades*, 8.3, 16). Of foreign origin usually, according to some tragedies, they could have lived next to the married man's house[488],

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[485] Simon Goldhill, 'The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology' in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?*, pp. 97-129, (p.116). Besides Ajax, Goldhill refers to Antigone and Philoctetes.

[486] Famous is the statement in one of Demosthenes' speeches (59.122), in which the speaker interprets the relation of men with various types of women in Athens as follows: 'we have *hetaerae* for pleasure, *pallacae* to care for our daily bodily needs, and *gynaecae* to bear us legitimate children'. In tragedies, concubines appear many times such as Iole in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, Cassandra in Euripides' *Hecuba*, and in Aeschilus's *Agamemnon*, and Andromache in Euripides' *Andromache*.

[487] Achilles' Briseis is the most famous among them.

[488] Various tragedies refer to such arrangements for concubines; in *Women in Trachis*, for example, Deianeira , the wife, refers to sharing a husband and a house with a concubine (545-548).

but their children did not have the legitimate children's rights[489], and they were not considered widows in case of the man's death. In *Ajax*, as in Homer[490], Eurysaces is recognised by his father[491] as his only heir, while his mother's long lament (937-973) over Ajax's dead body emphasises, besides her prominent position next to Ajax, her son's legitimate status. Unlike Homer where Briseis is never recognised as Achilles' wife, in *Ajax*, Tecmessa is called by him his future widow (650-53), thus, implicitly recognising his concubine as his wife whose silence during their dialogues (529, 684-686) is appreciated by him as it would be expected to be appreciated by any man in Athens.

Proceeding now with the analysis of Ajax's characteristics as a performing self, let it be said initially that Ajax is a warrior/hero who may seem as if he only cares about his own needs and demands, but he is also the fighter for others, the man who does not feel valiant unless the others pronounce him valiant, a warrior who gives his shield to his son and kills himself with his sword, the performer of the battle field and of his own death. In short, the shield personifies his place in the 'warrior society at Troy'[492], of him as a warrior who fights for the others, and the sword reveals the individual who may fight against the others and himself in a destructive way (C. Segal, p. 117) .

Actually, as will be demonstrated, Ajax's perception of his actions as a warrior is no other than simply not heroic since he thinks that he is above gods and others, in the community he belongs to and fights for, but which he simultaneously seems to

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[489] As discussed by Blundell, the status of the children of such a union is a subject for discussion since, during the Peloponnesian War, there is some indication that a law passed which permitted the children of concubines to become Athenian citizens(p.124).

[490] *Iliad*, 8.283-84, *Odyssey*,4.10-14, 14.200-210.

[491] In that sense, it seems that Ajax does not take into consideration Pericles' law of 451/0 according to which men's legitimate children are only from citizen wives.

[492] Charles Segal, 'Ajax' in *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), pp. 109-151 (p. 116) .

despise when they refuse to honour him. Although Ajax – as a living man and as a dead body – seems to exist because the others decide he will exist, since they do not punish him for his act and they eventually take care of his dead body, he does not realise the extent the others' actions – the men he defends and the ones he detests, and those he actually needs to complete his performing image – play in order for him to acquire the image of the honoured warrior he believes himself to be.

To delineate Ajax's performing self, and to construct him on stage, the analysis proceeds as following. First, in order to emphasise the social dimension of Ajax and the concept of Other he acts against, the analysis focuses on the character of Odysseus since it is his presence – as a warrior, as the one responsible for Ajax's lost honour according to Ajax, and as the defender of Ajax's social image afterwards – that marks Ajax's performing space before and after his death. Second, Ajax's verbal and visual *ergon* is presented – his decision to kill himself because he is deprived of his honour; as he says, 'the noble man must live with honour or be honourably dead'(479-480). But this *ergon*, besides exposing Ajax's conflicts, ambiguities, and his belief that he is in control of his actions – the characteristics of the performing self – exposes Ajax's failure to understand that there is no warrior without the others' appreciation of a warrior's honour. In fact, the portrait of Ajax's character is completed by arriving at the conclusion that Ajax's *ergon/agon* of his honour as a warrior proves to be less honourable than the others' perception of honour; they show themselves to be – with their decision to pay homage to his dead body – more honourable than he is.

'Sophocles has more time than he quite knows what to do with it'[493] one critic hints with reference to Ajax' death five hundred lines before the end of the play. Had the

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[493] A. J. A. Waldock (as cited by Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* ,p. 26).

critic's full review of *Ajax* been cited, more complaints would perhaps be added about Ajax' first appearance on stage ninety lines after the beginning of the play. It is certainly possible that *Ajax* is a tragedy not without flaws, as Taplin remarks (p.26), but the main character's late arrival and early departure are nothing less than a Sophoclean technique for drawing, through the presence of Athena and of Odysseus, the community setting Ajax is enclosed in, and, at the same time, underlining and suggesting through Ajax's original absence, the character's present relation with that community, more precisely, with Athena and Odysseus – his Other competitor in the setting – and finally, Ajax's death before the end of the play which, although it may seem as another absence similar to the original one, does not end his presence in the community, but rather restores and confirms it.

If Sophocles' only purpose had been to underline Ajax's social dimension in the first scene through the presence of any other but Odysseus, he would have presented the chorus of his sailors[494] first. For one thing, they are, for the audience, a much recognised group – a historical group in a way who remind the Athenians of the efficiency and readiness of the Athenian fleet – and who declare their loyalty to Ajax with the following words: 'Son of Telamon, you who occupy the seagirt pedestal of Salamis, when you prosper I rejoice'(134-135), or pointing to their close relation with him: 'small men without the aid of great men are unsafe guardians of a wall; for little men are best supported by the great and the great by smaller men'(158-161) – emphasising thus one of the basic concepts of Athenian politics, that of sharing responsibilities among all men regardless of the class distinctions of those involved in

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[494] Although in Homer (*Iliad*, 3.229, 6.5, 7.211) Ajax is surrounded by soldiers, the chorus of *Ajax* includes only sailors; Sophocles probably makes the association between Ajax and sailors because, according to Herodotus (8.64), Ajax's descendants helped Athenians in the Salamis battle with the Persian fleet in 480. The chorus of sailors serves also to reinforce the theme of home, the importance of the Attica land for those away of it, but also for those living in it: the sailors rave about the sight of Sounion, and of returning to 'holy Athens'(1216-1222).

public matters. But Sophocles' purpose aims toward the importance of Odysseus's presence on stage: Odysseus is Ajax's counterfeit[495], the Other, but he is also a periphery around Ajax. The two do not meet during the course of the play, but they relate through a non-visual, non-vocal exchange between two 'ghosts, or a fleeting shadow'(126) – the one being in the role of the centre, and the other in the role of the periphery[496] of the first. Ajax's centrality does not exist independently of Odysseus, just as any centre of any circle cannot exist without a periphery.

In this original scene of Ajax's absence, Athena[497] and Odysseus declare the community's solidarity with regard to Ajax's action of the night before when 'stung by anger'(39), he has slaughtered the animals thinking they were the sons of Atreus and Odysseus who had refused to honour him. Odysseus pities 'him in his misery'(121), but Athena, in contrast to her attitude towards Ajax whose confidence she ridicules in front of Odysseus(90-120), is 'eager to guide'(36-37) and protect Odysseus from Ajax, while her 'eye is always on him'(1).

Indeed, in this scene, through Athena's attitude towards Odysseus, through Ajax's words (105,110,115), but also through Odysseus's presence, Odysseus appears to be Ajax's Other. Characteristically, of these two, 'moving like a Spartan hound with keen scent'(6-8), marking 'valiant'(212) Ajax's time and space, Odysseus, unlike

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[495] David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.78.

[496] Nancy Worman, 'The *Herkos Achaion* Transformed: Character Type and Spatial Meaning in the *Ajax*', *Classical Philology*, 96 (2001), 228-252 (p. 231).

[497] In her extensive analysis of *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood points out the fact that of the existing full tragedies of Sophocles, only two involve the presence of gods. First, in *Philoctetes*, Heracles's appearance occurs only at the end (1409) 'as a god in epiphany'; therefore, the interaction between gods and human beings seems rather 'distanced'. And in *Ajax*, Athena's presence in the prologue is not of a deity in epiphany. The audience may see her on a level higher than Odysseus, as the writer asserts, but Athena interacts with both, Ajax and Odysseus, and she controls what Ajax sees (69-70); the fact that Ajax can see her is interpreted by Sourvinou-Inwood as an 'abnormal state' of things since Ajax is in such a state. In short, the writer's assertion from her study of Sophocles' tragedies is that the tragedian, most probably, aims at 'distancing' gods from mortals – rather than aiming at a closer interaction between them as it happens with Euripides (482-489).

Ajax, is the survivor in the camp of Greeks to honour Ajax, the 'last of the heroes'[498], whose *ergon/agon* on stage is perceived through Odysseus's counter presence: he may be perceived as the community's anthropomorphic dimension since he represents its care for the heroes' fame. As he appears, Odysseus has a constant need to move around, according to Worman, (p.231), to search out and discover who the doer of the animal slaughter was (24,25), even to spread rumours about, as the chorus emphasises more than once(148-153, 188-192, 197-199). His searching causes Athena to keep her eye on him constantly so that she will know exactly where he – this sharp hunter of Greeks – moves in search of his victim, 'scanning' and 'tracking' Ajax; and when present at the end, Odysseus's presence is short but decisive: he arranges for the body to be buried, and before the end of the play, yet again, he is gone. But again, he is there only for the one intent, to bury Ajax, to encircle him in his natural place, just as he was encircling him in his living space by tracking him down in front of his hut.

In contrast to his Other's mobility, Ajax appears to be immobile, encircled, even trapped by his Other, but also by himself, in a physical and mental space up to the end of his life when he commits suicide – as an unfinished, incomplete performer of his death – yet finished and complete with Odysseus surviving after him in the role of what Ajax is not, in order for Ajax to find his final place in the community where he belongs through his past *ergon*.

Ever since Odysseus's initiative in seeking him out, and after Ajax's failure to capture Odysseus in order to take revenge, Ajax is surrounded by visual images of encirclement which underline the immobile state of his physical presence, and metaphorically, his fixed, stubborn state of mind – as opposed to his rival's flexible mind – which leads him to his *ergon*, a fixed, stubborn act of killing himself which he

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[498] B. M. W. Knox, 'The *Ajax* of Sophocles', *HSCP*, 65 (1961), 1-37(p. 20).

accomplishes with his sword. As such, the chorus, in its first encounter with him, urges him to come out of the hut as he is 'rooted'(191) there for long 'in the midst' of the beasts, and when the door of the hut opens, Ajax is seen sitting motionless among the slaughtered cattle. He refers to something like a wave sent to him in 'circles, rapidly'(352), and he asks Tecmessa to 'bar' the doors of the hut more than once. He feels locked in his fate, and he wants to 'escape the anger'(655) of Athena, while later, Calchas, through a messenger, orders his family to lock him inside(754) to escape the anger of the goddess. The last living portrait of Ajax shows him fixing his sword to the ground which he will fall upon in a marked, rooted, immobile position, his final escape to death, he and his sword, the symbol of his pride and honour (C. Segal, 'Ajax', p.117), which is that other word for the destructive side of him as warrior that his fixed mind perceives after his honour has been disregarded by the others.

The emphatic contrast between Odysseus and Ajax, the restless Other versus the motionless Self, may be underlined by another contrast, the change of setting – not common in tragedies. Despite the fact that, as expected, the camp of Greeks in Troy should be the only drama setting, the scene transforms from a camp to a beach where Ajax commits suicide – changing, therefore, from an active, full of movement, camp to an empty *topos* where Ajax's body is found. And yet, these two *topoi* become one when the community of Greeks follows Ajax to his death scene, and establishes solidarity among its members by turning the beach into a death ritual setting in his honour. In that sense, the final unified double setting of the civil and the physical, may remind the audience of the contradictory yet unified connection between Ajax and Odysseus – from Odysseus' first appearance, to Ajax's presence and death, until Odysseus' presence in the last scene on stage, as if the *topos* of their total

performance represents the unifying civil and natural setting of the audience's theatre of Dionysus.

Ajax, therefore, unlike Odysseus, displays, his main *ergon/agon* of honour, his voluntary death, an under-surfaced, buried relation to his physical space, the place of his death, his fatal form of reaction to the insult of his community, his own dead centre marked by his sword – despite a living periphery of solidarity, marked by his shield, surrounding him in this same community. And although Ajax sees himself as an object of ridicule (367, 382, 426, 454) by the others, they – Athena and the men – according to his perception of them, do not provide for him any knowledge about himself since he chooses not to see anything worthy in connection with them (398-400). In that way, Ajax, again, differs from Odysseus who sees all (379), and places himself in the position of the mocked Ajax (124), or the dead Ajax (1365).

And yet, this performer of stubborn mentality and fixed ideas, being in a state of *agon* with his former warriors, immediately before his suicide, bewilders critics with a speech he nearly blames on Tecmessa (651-652) who plays, at these crucial moments of Ajax's decisions, the role of his most immediate family member. Focusing for a moment on her, although she does not affect Ajax's *ergon* and perception of it, she and her son underline the ambiguous relation Ajax has with the others and his family: on the one hand, he alienates himself from the others and his family, and on the other, by handling his shield to his son, he asks to be remembered as an honourable man.

Tecmessa's speech – in an effort to make him aware of his *oikos* needs instead of his honour as a warrior – appeals to his role as an *oikos* protector who does not have the right to abandon her and her son. She reminds him first of her misfortunes when he took her as a slave from Phrygia (487-490), of the pleasures she gave him (491,

510-514), along with the son she gave birth to (510-514), and she also appeals to his being a son who is expected to return to Salamis (506-509).

To Tecmessa's pleading tone, Ajax's response does not offer the comfort she wants to hear – that his family is truly more important to him than his honour as a warrior – but a promise that she will be protected by his half brother Teucer (560-565) – recognising in that sense, the family he will leave behind. Besides, Ajax, actually, blames her and the influence of a woman's words on him, for his speech in which he seems to have forgotten the idea of death, even the idea of his being the warrior of his sword. It is as if he wants to deceive Tecmessa and the chorus about his intention to kill himself, but, as a critic wonders, does he change his mind or his intentions?[499] Knox does not accept the idea that Ajax lies[500], and Garvie 'separates Ajax's intellectual from his emotional response'[501], and in a way, agrees with Knox: he does not believe that the speech is deceptive (ibid) – part of which goes as following:

> All things long and countless time brings to birth in dark-
> ness and covers after they have been revealed! Nothing is
> beyond expectation; the dread oath and the unflinching
> purpose can be overcome(646-649).

In what comes next, Ajax becomes the warrior of his shield, the man of others in the community of others, the one of the 'we' instead of the 'I', first, emotional towards the people around him, and then, rather didactic: 'we shall learn to yield to gods'(666), and 'how shall we not come to know how to be sensible?'(677). And later, his speech becomes ambiguous:

> But as regards all this, things will turn out well; and do

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[499] Francis M. Dunn, 'Change of Mind in Greek Tragedy' in *Classical Philology* (Oct. 1998), pp. 375-381 (p. 378).
[500] B. M. W. Knox, 'The Ajax of Sophocles', pp. 1-37.
[501] In *Sophocles: Ajax*, ed. and trans. by A. F. Garvie (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1998), p. 186.

you go inside, woman, and pray to the gods that the things

my heart longs for shall in all fullness be accomplished(684-686).

Who is this Ajax? Does he really express respect to gods, and sympathy to those around him? Has he forgiven the acts of others against him? Has his feeling of solidarity and respect to the community's decisions come back to him? Does he think he is not in control of his actions?

The questions coming to mind are perplexing, and perhaps, the spectator rather than the reader of this speech might be able to grasp the meaning of it in its fullest[502].

It is possible that right there, before Ajax's death, the speech might come as the epitome of a number of ambiguities and conflicts Sophocles associates with Ajax, ambiguities which will follow him to his death, and by attributing directly to him an ambiguous speech just before Ajax' final act as a living 'shadow' and before his other act as just a shadow, Sophocles draws the final, written lines to the spoken, seen performance of a man who may be and may not be valiant, is and is not in control of his life, a man who 'creates continuous tension between what is inside and what is outside of society'(C. Segal, 'Ajax', p.112), a man who fights the enemy alone for the sake of others but is also involved in a spectacular *agon* with beasts mistaken as

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[502] According to Taplin, everything said about this speech has to be controversial because Sophocles means to make it sound that way; but as he adds, the best way to interpret the speech is to focus on the idea of time as Ajax means it in the beginning of the speech, not the immediate time of his death, but that of the 'longer future'. In a way, as Taplin continues, this speech reflects the thoughts of a man who sees beyond death, to the world he will leave behind which, because of the closeness of his death, he is able to see (p. 128-130) under a new understanding – but only momentarily, I might add.

Another point of view is that of Christopher Gill who bases his interpretation of the speech on the principle of honour expressed by Achilles (*Iliad* 9.645-8): the man for whom all options to live honourably, therefore to act honourably towards others are closed, should die honourably. Ajax, after the unfair – according to his judgment – decision of the Greeks, cannot live honourably, and his speech, Gill continues, exposes 'the psycho-ethical conflict [...] between the desire to make an exemplary gesture based on reflective reasoning about ethical principles and the recognition of the validity of other types of ethical claim' (in *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy and Philosophy*, p. 205). With his speech, Ajax reaffirms his desire to die honourably but 'in a way that acknowledges the more standard ethical claim' (p.205) made by Tecmessa's early argument about leaving behind his orphan son, an unprotected woman, and a lamenting father. The deception-speech is a continuation of the earlier verbal conflict between Ajax and Tecmessa, an argument 'about what nobility requires of Ajax in the present situation' (ibid.), that is a consideration of the ones he will leave behind.

people, a man in a sacred conflict with gods, or simply, a man in a continuous, ambiguous conflict – but with whom? With people? Gods? Or with himself until the final act?

Characteristically, Ajax appears in connection with many ambiguous words and images: Odysseus calls all human beings 'shadows'(`126) as if he wants to underline the fact that, like Ajax, all living beings have a wrong impression of their doings (125); Ajax, according to Tecmessa, talks to a shadow (301-304); Athena deceives Ajax into taking beasts for humans; and Ajax is seen in the dark (29-31) by the Greeks. Besides images, he is also associated with ambiguous expressions during various parts of the play. As for example, when he says that he is not responsible for the killing of animals, but that Athena is: 'the fault is not mine, but if one of the gods does harm, even the coward may escape the stronger man'(454-455); in another instance though, he boasts of his own deeds, refusing the help of gods and their unmanly strength: 'Queen, stand by the other Argives; where I am the enemy shall never break through'(774-775).

Furthermore, what is associated with Ajax is his need to be self-destructive, but at the same time, his apparent need to fight for all, to protect all, and risk his life for all (1267-1269) when nobody else does, as Teucer defends him against Agamemnon's rationale for not burying him. Along with this quality, comes Ajax's counter need to be recognized by all, he, 'the bold, the valiant, the one who never trembled in battle`(364-365), as he says of himself: he is in need of the respect of the insignificant people, 'for little men are best supported by the great and great by smaller men'(158), the chorus thinks, and obviously, Ajax wants and is in need of small people, of his son, of Teucer, of Odysseus – even his wife who covers his body with her cloak – to secure his need for the eternal, not the ephemeral respect he longs for, as Whitman

argues, adding thus, another point of ambiguity: 'a man who would rather die than tolerate a single day of disgrace is grandly and heroically *ephemeros*, defiant of time, but also a victim of time'[503], a warrior chasing the glory of moment.

Had he not been a 'victim of time' he would not have granted to his son his shield, and not his sword, to have in memory of his father, showing thus another conflicting force in his life directly related to his weapons. His son's name is exactly this, Eurysaces, 'Broad Shield'(575-576), and Ajax is no one else but the Homeric 'shieldbearer'(19), as Odysseus calls him, while his sailors are his 'shield-bearing warriors'(565). The shield, as already emphasised, is part of Ajax' virtues, his connection to the others, his defence of the others, the armour that symbolizes his solidarity, in contrast, however, to his sword, the instrument of his death, the killer of others and of himself. As Charles Segal perceives, 'whereas the shield wins him his place in the public world of cooperative virtue – *arête* – and glory, [...] the sword belongs to the [...] private realm of his own [...] mysterious powers' (p. 117).

It is the sword which accompanies him on the chosen journey of his final *ergon*, as an instrument-symbol of his *agon* with his own forces:

> Ah, darkness that is my light, gloom that is most bright for
>
> me, take me to dwell in you! For I am no longer
>
> worthy to look upon the race of gods nor upon that of
>
> mortal men to any profit (395-400).
>
> [...]
>
> Hail, surging straits of the sea, caves by the shore, and
>
> pastures of the coast! Long, long has been the time that
>
> you have detained me about Troy; but no more, no more

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[503] Cedric H. Whitman, *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 70-71.

shall I draw breath! (412-417).

The sword and the shield surround Ajax in circles of actions, symbols of his conflicts with himself, ambiguous instruments of an existence heroic and doomed at the same time, as two ambivalent poles of the single tragedy of a man who thought he could be only heroic, only valiant, only huge as is his body; but he is not. His are the actions of major and minor cycles of a man, who, in all his illusions, is a subject of a self-sacrifice, a lonely act in a deserted beach[504], a choice that some of the spectators – had they not been aware of Ajax's connections with the history of their city – might have found not very instructive.

And – to pause for a moment and consider the communication between the dramatic character, Ajax at this point, and the audience – it is also quite possible, that characters like Ajax, and acts like his, might have driven Plato into expressing certain negative thoughts on the effect of tragedy and tragedy's characters on spectators. As such, to remember some of his assertions, for Plato, tragedy's effect on people is strong but far from positive because it only imitates reality[505] – instead of being reality – and it arouses emotions, instead of controlling them. According to Plato, tragedy should not play a primary role in education, and therefore, he considers the effect of tragedy mostly emotional, and therefore, he condemns it.

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[504] Since a change of setting is not very common in tragedies, and since in this tragedy, the change is parallel to the main character's fatal decisions, and to his relation with the community, it would be helpful to consider the way this change might have happened in the theatre of Dionysus. In that sense, in his analysis of the change of setting, from the camp of Greeks to the beach, Rehm, after referring to the sequence of events which prepare the audience for the shift – such as Ajax's description of the beach, the exit of the sailors and Tecmessa on their way to find Ajax, and his final monologue – comes to the following conclusion: that because Ajax's death demands 'a complete scenic break from the camp and not a simple move' to the side of the stage, the 'break' must have come from Tecmessa whose *oikos* breaks down when Ajax leaves. As such, before his reappearance, Tecmessa, crying "Ah, me!'(803) expresses her total despair, and then, rushes around giving orders to the others on stage to bring Teucer, Ajax's half brother, and to go in various directions to find Ajax. At that moment, Rehm thinks that 'before, she rushes off, during her anguished outburst at Ajax. Tecmessa rips down the tent fabric that marks the setting, a desperate action that accords with her sense that Ajax's absence means the death of her *oikos*;' and he concludes; 'her action could reveal preset elements suggesting the beach that lay under the cloth of the tent'. (*The Play of Space*, pp.131.132)

[505] Reality, for Plato, is what is perceived through the intellect, and not through the senses – as already discussed.

Specifically, Plato's concerns about tragedy involve the analysis of concepts related to his ideal state, and in his effort to conceive of that state, he focuses on the idea that poetry's power 'corrupts'(*Republic*, X.7.605D) – the models of gods and heroes presented by poetry are extremely powerful[506] that is – but, at the same time 'inferior in respect of reality [...] and his (the poet's) appeal is to the inferior part of the soul'(X.6.605B): the poet 'sets up in each individual soul a vicious constitution of fashioning phantoms far removed from reality'(X.6.605C). Consequently, if this is the effect of poetry/tragedy, Plato refuses to include it in his ideal state: 'we can admit no poetry into our city, [...] we had good grounds (X.7.607, 8.607B) then for dismissing her from our city.'

Before proceeding with the further analysis of *Ajax*, let it be said, that Plato's remarks include a contradiction since he condemns poetry or tragedy, but he was a poet in his youth, and he condemns myths and heroes of tragedies, but he himself 'works mimetically'(Gebauer and Wulf, p.31) since his dialogues include myths which are employed to teach people, especially young people. Besides, as happens in this tragedy, the spectators not only watch Ajax's acts, but also the *consequences* of his acts; they are not only aware of his final deed, but also of his war deeds; and finally, they not only watch him, but the others' actions around him; and most important, they become aware of the solidarity of the community at the outcome of the play – an exceptionally important concept related to everybody's well being in the state.

Returning to Ajax and the consequences of his suicide, Sophocles perceives him as the object of a verbal city competition between Teucer and Menelaus, and between Odysseus and Agamemnon, of a ritual of reciprocity, in which the community,

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[506] Gunter Gebauer, and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture – Art – Society*, p. 33.

although he claims and he behaves as if he, the Homeric bulwark, does not need it, he dies longing to be an honourable part of it. But does he deserve to be an honourable part of it? Is he as honourable as Odysseus is, the man he considers his enemy?

What is not valiant is Ajax's attitude in considering his greatness above that of the gods', and to consider his actions superior to theirs, as if he does not recognise any other force beyond his own. Ajax' *hybris* to Athena is his non-heroic act which makes him small and similar to all those he protects, since he seems to think that his achievements are so great that even gods should yield to them.

But the truth is that his heroic cycle is in his human one, and not the human cycle inside his heroic one. His mortality is above his heroism, and as a mortal, he is judged by other mortals who, although they originally seem not to forgive his act against the camp of the Greeks, nevertheless, finally, yield to those reasons Odysseus asks them to consider in connection to Ajax's heroism.

First though, since Ajax's body creates a new *topos* and new dynamics of community solidarity, the scene must have been reminded the audience of a funeral ritual. Besides the awesome shape of Ajax's body and sword, Tecmessa's and their son's 'silent presence as suppliants testifies to the aura of the body, anticipating Ajax's transformation from a traitor to a sacred hero'(Rehm, *The play of Space*, p.133). Tecmessa covers the body with her cloak, and they all, the family, the chorus, and the warriors, surround him now – just as Odysseus was surrounding him before. Now, they all participate in this ritual, and Odysseus, once again, but truly next to him now, in the presence of all, defends Ajax the warrior, and Ajax, the dead body. It is as if a funeral ritual transforms into a court ritual, and a court ritual decides for the outcome of a funeral ritual. The camp of the Greeks transforms into a city scene of family rituals turning into public rituals, and of dead warriors – in a highly ritualistic

act of self sacrifice – turning into objects of dispute between state officials. Is it an Athenian scene? It is since at the end of the dispute, Teucer removes the sword from the body, lifts the body, and carries it (1409-1420) 'out of the theatre in a funeral procession' which underlines Ajax's 'future role as a civic hero of Athens, his story told in the theatre and his cult celebrated in the agora'(Rehm, *The Play of Space,* p.137).

As happens with the actual dispute now, the community in the face of Agamemnon, diminishes Ajax's heroic status, by affirming angrily that the community is above the man, because all men are part of the community of all:

> Have the Achaeans no man like him? […]
>
> We are likely to regret having announced a contest for
>
> the arms of Achilles if we are to be denounced as evil
>
> […] and even when you are defeated you will not bow
>
> to the decision of the majority of judges.(1237-1242)

The values, however, open to discussions in the assembly, or in courts, are interpreted variously by all individuals, not only by leaders, and they are questioned and challenged by leaders or non-leaders alike, even outsiders such as Teucer; for them, the refusal of the authorities to bury him is equal to the abolition of gods' laws especially when this man, Ajax, fought for Menelaus and Agamemnon 'because of the oaths that bound him'(113). A burial, therefore, similar to some extent with the one in *Antigone,* creates a conflict between new laws and old ones, and justifies its position among the most important rituals related to family and state values.

To Agamemnon's willingness to hear Odysseus 'his greatest friend'(1331), and to the chorus's hopes that Odysseus will 'untie the tangle'(1317), Ajax's Other man not only attacks the decision to leave the body unburied, but he also attacks the attitude

behind the decision. Thus, Agamemnon's words that Ajax does not deserve a burial, according to Odysseus, deserve the answer: 'violence must not so prevail on you that you trample justice under foot'(1334-1335). And furthermore, 'it is unjust to injure a noble man, if he is dead, even if it happens that you hate him'(1344-1345). Odysseus does not hesitate to attack Agamemnon personally when he shouts at him: 'do not take pleasure in a superiority that is ignoble!'(1349), or when he implies that he has 'rigid mind'(1361).

The agonistic dialogue – similar to the ones in *Electra* or *Medea*, containing various techniques of defending an issue as sacred as that of a burial – ends with Odysseus's victory since not only is his opinion going to be granted, but he does not fail to totally and incisively encircle Ajax as a warrior within its social position, as all performances of heroes/warriors deserve to be granted – whether in the camp of Greeks at Troy, Salamis, or Athens – since the community depends on bulwarks such as Ajax, their myths, cults and sacrifices for its glory and well being.

So be it then for him, the 'nobler among mortals [...] of Ajax, when he lived, I say'(1416-1417). Through the gaze of the others, his death unifies his image with the two weapons of a man whose name/word turns out to be, at one moment, synonymous with his actions and his sorrows:

> Alas![507] Who ever would have thought that my name
>
> would come to harmonize with my sorrow?(431-432)

At that moment, it is as if his name/identity initiates his actions which affect his self, the subject of his actions as well as, however, the object of himself who decides to kill himself because he can no longer see and harmonise his name with his actions and with his own image of his old self.

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[507] Aias, his name, means 'alas'.

In that sense, if Ajax was to be perceived independently from the others, separate from the others, away from the totality of the past, present, and future setting, it is possible that he could have been characterised as a man who thinks only of himself. But, as Odysseus indicates, as Ajax's total performing self underlines, and as the last dialogue has clarified, the others in the community may be considered as rigid, as unjust, and as violent as Ajax can be, and therefore, Ajax, no matter how controversial it may seem, is exactly this: a performer with ambiguities and conflicts – of 'Ajax, when he lived, I say'.

To epitomise the analysis of Ajax's self, his performance on stage exposes an individual who, because of what he considers to be a failure of his actions to take revenge, becomes aware of the fact that he is not as great or as significant to the others as he thought he was. This awareness is expressed in nothing other than his killing himself – an act of admitting a new perception of himself he cannot imagine he is able to face.

Concluding, the analysis of Ajax demonstrates an individual/agent who, through his social roles and behaviour in his community – which contain the major elements of the performance culture – connects the Athenian society with the theatre, and at the same time, projects Sophocles' perception of the relation of the performing self with the Athenian culture. Accordingly, Ajax's performance on stage demonstrates the tragedian's perception that Ajax is a member of a performance community which endorses warriors as diversified as those of Ajax and Odysseus for the sake of the community's solidarity, and for the sake of sharing values and principles recognised by all.

Euripides' *Hippolytus*[508]

Aphrodite executes her vengeance against the chaste Hippolytus by causing Phaedra, his stepmother, to fall in love with him, against his will. Phaedra, worrying that his refusal indicates his determination to reveal her secret love to his father, Theseus, accuses him of having raped her, and she then commits suicide. When Theseus learns his wife's side of the story, he punishes Hippolytus with one of the three curses bestowed on him by Poseidon resulting in his son's death.

Hippolytus is the second character of the male model of performing self of this unit which compares two individuals in their relation with their community. The choice of Hippolytus is based on the fact that – like Ajax – he illustrates a self/agent who, on the one hand, comes into conflict with the society, and on the other, is characterised by cultural elements/connections between society and theatre; at the same time, Euripides draws a character/antipode to Ajax in terms of roles. Compared to Ajax's being a legitimate son and father, Hippolytus exhibits his illegitimate origin. To Ajax's antagonistic deeds and his *agon* in the Trojan war, Hippolytus's original display is that of his hunting and his worship of Artemis – connected thus with the ritualistic values of the society. Ajax faces a hero's end, while Hippolytus shows a youngster coming into society which ends with his death. In short, Hippolytus's choices – his own interpretation of his roles – connects him principally to being an

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[508] Euripides, 'Hippolytus', trans. by David Grene, in *Euripides I*, The Complete Greek Tragedies, ed. by David Grene and Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942; repr. 2004), pp. 157-221.

apragmon. Euripides' treatment of the performance culture in Hippolytus has challenging parameters concerning feelings of love rather than a warrior's anger over Achilles' weapons, as happens with Ajax: Euripides exposes Hippolytus's performance on stage without failing to expose the others' performance, primarily in connection with their close relationship to his adolescent one. Does Hippolytus – in all the parameters of his complex presence on stage – actualise a model of self of the performance culture? He does for the reasons the following analytical discussion aims at demonstrating now.

First, in the same way as in *Bacchae* with Dionysus's presence, in *Hippolytus*, the very first scene informs the audience, through Aphrodite's words, of Hippolytus's worshipping preferences in the setting of the performance culture, and consequently, of his acceptance – or not – of community norms connected to his status as a male adolescent.

As such, Aphrodite comes forth rejoicing in mortals' honours to her (7,8), as all gods crave to be honoured, and she calls Hippolytus blasphemous (12) because he refuses to worship her, and honours Artemis instead(15). She refers to Artemis as *parthenos*, the virgin huntress, and associates her with Hippolytus's hunting in the woods (17). Indeed, when he, carrying nets and hunting spears, roams in the house with his friends, sings to her, prays, and approaching her altar, offers her a garland (72). He calls Artemis *parthenos* (69), the same as Aphrodite, and pronounces his total devotion to her. Yet, as the audience would have known, as the chorus of women mention in the scene with Phaedra (141-168), but as Hippolytus fails to refer to, the worship of Artemis is only partially in connection with hunting. Besides initiating cults containing certain brutal practices, Artemis is associated with 'three of the most important transitions of young women's lives all of them linked to their reproductive

role'[509] as well as with protecting women during childbirth. A parameter of Hippolytus's referring to only one aspect of Artemis's titles is the fact that he calls her *ourania* (58) which, according to Sourvinou-Inwood, is a cult title for Aphrodite not of Artemis, and, in that sense, this writer asserts, the audience – quite familiar with the two goddesses' various titles and cults – after becoming aware of the young man's failure to refer to the total image of Artemis, especially to her being linked to the transition to maturity, would have found it paradoxical that one who claims to be totally devoted to her would not use the same titles the others use in reference to her. And Sourvinou-Inwood concludes that Hippolytus's monolithic use of adjectives would have been a sign for the audience of Hippolytus's 'unbalanced privileging of Artemis at the expense of Aphrodite that Aphrodite had just spoken of.'[510]

Indeed, Hippolytus's Artemis is exclusively his, as is also his refusal to worship Aphrodite, and furthermore – as the analysis of his self conception will demonstrate – as exclusive as his refusal is, at the beginning of the play, to accept that, as an adolescent, he has to leave behind his life as a huntsman and to endorse a state of adulthood, and of being in love. Therefore, Hippolytus's devotion to a monolithic Artemis and his refusal of Aphrodite, is an initial warning for the audience that the young man changes the order of those things not only associated with goddesses' cults or the absence of them, but also in connection with his refusal to endorse his

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[509] Brutal practices linked with Artemis were taking place at Halae, Attica during rituals: drops of blood were drawn from a man's throat with the use of a sword. As for cults in connection with young women's transitional periods, the most known was taking place at Brauron, Attica, where girls around the age of ten were brought into the goddesses' sanctuary for a year wearing yellow dresses and dancing 'bear dances' – in memory of the slaughter by youth of Artemis's sacred bear (Blundell, pp. 29, 30).

[510] Sourvinou-Inwood mentions also that at the end of the play (713), the chorus refers to Artemis as a whole again.(p.327)

necessity/obligation to pass from adolescent to adulthood – a transition[511] celebrated and initiated fully by the city laws endorsed by young men in the city.

Announcing thus, in such a ritualistic way, Hippolytus's radical refusal to conform to the proper worship of the goddess of love – another way of announcing Hippolytus's refusal to accept the presence of Other, and to 'pass from the yoking of horses to the yoking of maidens'[512] – Euripides, the same as Sophocles, underlines the importance of Other in his character's life by withdrawing him from the stage for quite some time. In the case of Ajax, Sophocles' placing of Ajax off stage at the beginning and at the end, emphasises synchronically the difference between the two performers, Ajax and Odysseus, as well as the dependence of Ajax's fulfilment of performance on Odysseus. With reference to *Hippolytus*[513], however, Euripides'

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[511] As mentioned in chapter one, rituals associated with the transition/passage from adolescent to maturity involved a period of time during which the youngsters had to live away from the community, and they had to go under military training, live in groups, and express the change of status in the community by changing clothes, or their sexual roles among other things. In Athens, where Theseus appears to be the *ephebe's* hero, the Oschophoria is the most celebrated ritual by young Athenians, and is related with the myth of Theseus's killing of the Minotaur and his returning to Attica without changing his sails – an event which caused Aegeus's death. In the memory of this voyage, among other events, a procession was taking place in which two youngsters were dressed as girls, and they were carrying *oschoe* – vine branches. The ritual was finishing with a large meal shared by all. As for state rituals, the youngsters, at the age of 18, had to go through 'two initiations, each with its distinctive myths and rituals, into *phratry* and into *deme*' (Bowie, pp.45,46,51). According to the same author, the youngsters had to go through some 'training in hoplite tactics, which were by no means simple, and some ceremonial marking of their membership in the *deme* and accession to full political status' (p.50).

[512] Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, p.222.

[513] There is a definite disagreement among scholars as to whether or not Hippolytus is the central character of the tragedy. Many of them demonstrate that all the characters, even Phaedra's nurse, share a surprising number of spoken lines that are close to each other, but as Knox declares, the centrality is not a matter of lines but a matter of relations between characters, and of the nature of their relationships (Bernard Knox, 'The Hippolytus of Euripides', in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy,* ed. by Erich Segal (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 311-331 (p. 311)). Joining his line of thought, which emphasises as well the difficulty of plainly answering the question of the centrality of character, the opinion held here is that Euripides intends to have Hippolytus, and not Phaedra, be the main character as his two versions (W. S. Barrett, *Euripides' Hippolytus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 1-45) of the play – apart from the tragedy's title – show. Forced by the public's contempt, from watching Phaedra's bold exposure of lust toward her stepson, he wrote his second version with a much more subdued Phaedra, but with the same Hippolytus. His second attempt adds new dimensions to the ideas of the play, but the consistency of Hippolytus's character might be indicative of Euripides' unshakable focus on the clear-cut degree of centrality for the young man, rather than Phaedra's centrality, as the common claim is.

Other scholars' comments refer to this tragedy as being 'a psychological portrait of a human moral weakness' (Bruno Snell, *Scenes from Greek Drama*, p. 47), or they mention Oedipal implications of Freudian origin indispensable for the interpretation (Sotiris Manopoulos, 'Euripides' Hippolytus: the

choice of having him briefly on stage in the beginning, then of removing him completely for the sake of Phaedra's presence – his Other's presence – and finally of having him exchanging his presence on stage for that of Phaedra until her death, points, first, to the fact that the One – either Phaedra or Hippolytus – is not only the One, but the Other of his/her Other, and second, to the effect that Phaedra's presence has on Hippolytus which leads manifestly to Hippolytus's death in the end – fulfilling thus the much announced punishment by Aphrodite of Hippolytus which takes the shape of Phaedra's passion for him.

Yet, in the analysis of the *Hippolytus's* performing self that follows, it is argued that, in contrast to his Other's pseudo-social, therefore private self, who, unlike Hippolytus, conforms to social rules, Hippolytus's dealing with his stepmother's – his Other's – lust for him, exposes simultaneously his becoming a public performing self in accordance with the Other's supposedly social self – a fact that eventually causes his death. Therefore, although he is tragically affected physically and socially by the Other's actions, when comparing her actions with his actions, he proves to display a socially oriented self, and as such, his education is quite fulfilled, while his passing from puberty to maturity means also his passing from life to death.

To disentangle the above argument, the analysis of the characteristics of Hippolytus's performing self, in order to demonstrate the connection between his being an agent and the performance culture, will proceed as follows: it concentrates first on Phaedra's presence since, as she claims, she is Hippolytus's Other whose

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Familiar Things', *Psychoanalytic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1999), pp. 177-189 (p. 185)) of the characters' psyche. All these views are immensely valuable, but Euripides, as all of his tragedies verify, is concerned with the social implications of his productions, not the psychological dimensions derived from his themes. Therefore, those critics who openly connect the portrait of Hippolytus with that of Charmides in the homonymous Socratic dialogue are correct. (Christopher Gill, 'The Articulation of the Self in Euripides' Hippolytus', in *Euripides, Women and Sensuality*, ed. by Anton Powel (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 76-107 (p. 77)), since they both explore the nature of the social virtue of *sophrosyne*, as approached by two adolescents of the Athenian milieu.

feelings towards him, under Aphrodite's[514] guidance, are what initiates Hippolytus' ritual of passage from his world of chastity to the world of connection with the Other and his death. Besides, the presentation of her actions at the beginning of the analysis of Hippolytus's self aims to compare her actions with his in order for his public self to later become transparently delineated: they are each other's Other, yet, although Phaedra claims to love him, she hurts him, while he, although he does not love her, does not hurt her. As it is, the distant interconnection of their erotic stimulus is deadly for them both, and although they seem completely disconnected, they, due to Phaedra's performance, affect each other directly, even fatally. As for the analysis of Hippolytus, after exposing Phaedra's conflict between her feelings and her duty, the ambiguities of this conflict, and her notion that she is in control of her being as a proper woman of Athenian society – elements which may only seem to outline some elements of the performing self but not her *public* self – Hippolytus's self comes next: first, he is shown to be a worshiper of Artemis, a performance which lasts until the presence of Other in his life, and his alteration into a self full of conflicts, ambiguities, the notion that he is in control of a situation, and a brief but socially oriented *ergon/agon* neither Phaedra – nor his father to a lesser degree – is capable of performing, and whose mistaken notions of controlling not only theirs but his actions as well result in Hippolytus's death.

The apparently perplexing, ambiguous relation of disconnection/connection between private Phaedra and Hippolytus – since they exchange the roles of Other in

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[514] Before proceeding with the characters, at this point, a comment by Knox should be added about the presence of gods and the concept of free will in the play which is related to the analysis that follows. The presence of gods in the play, as already observed, is more obvious and seemingly more deterministic than in any other Greek play. At the same time however, 'in no other Greek tragedy do so many people change their minds about so many important matters'(Knox, p. 312). This statement seems a correct one, and therefore, without avoiding mention of the fact that it is Aphrodite who initiates the plot involving the connection between Phaedra and Hippolytus, the analysis deals with the two as individuals with their own desires and decisions.

each other's life – is meant to be perplexing, even confusing, because it is underlined as such throughout the entire play by the image of 'knotting' which ties the two of them together, as well as the other characters in an 'inextricable nexus of interdependence'[515]. Of the many references to the idea of 'knotting'[516], and unknotting, the ones following are the most characteristic: Phaedra's 'spirit is bound in chains of grief'(160); she uses a knot – noose – to hang herself (770); Hippolytus's fatal accident is caused when 'he was dragged along in an inextricable knot (1238); Theseus 'unbars the fastening of the door (808) so he can see Phaedra's body; finally, Hippolytus, bound as he was, becomes unbound (1244) at the end of the play when he ends the quarrel with his father: his name actually means the one whose body is 'loosened by horses'[517]. But before freeing himself with his death from the knotting experience he is in, Hippolytus, up to a point, performs in parallel lines with Phaedra, yet, in a distinctively different way: because he does not hide any guilt as Phaedra does, he learns from his virtue in contrast to Phaedra who turns hers into vice.

Hippolytus's Other, Phaedra, despite her original intention to keep her love for Hippolytus her own secret, finally, while in her palace chambers, reveals her feelings only to her nurse since the nurse is the only person she trusts, and because Phaedra's behaviour articulates her hidden passion more intelligibly and skilfully than any statement about her love would. She is silent and passive first because as a mother, wife, and Hippolytus's stepmother, she decides to behave as if she does not exist as a woman-lover. But she is already involved in a conflict she cannot escape from, and she exposes what the chorus (161-164) calls a woman's nature which is a *dystropos*

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[515] Charles Segal, 'Euripides *Hippolytus* 108-112. Tragic Irony and Tragic Justice', *Hermes*, 97(1969), 297-307(p. 302).
[516] Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*, p. 225.
[517] W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, p. 112-113.

harmonia: for biological reasons, a woman feels unhappy for no reason, and comes at odds with herself: this is her way of being harmoniously in disharmony with herself – of being full of ambiguities and conflicts, in other words (Zeitlin, p.237). Phaedra decides that she should behave as if her lust does not affect her, but it does affect her; and when she begins talking, her spoken words on stage are as expressive, meaningful and indicative as her actions would have been.

In her first appearance, her words express the conflict between her desire and duty, or her self as the subject of her desire, and as an object of virtue in the others' gaze. She asks the servants to 'lift her up' so that the beauty of her body will expose itself; then, she wants to take her hat off, and lastly, she asks her nurse to cover her face with a veil. Yet, her body image does not seem to satisfy her; she gives harsh orders to the servants, and she finds her serenity only when, with long meaningful sentences, she describes her dream of walking in meadows, under trees, next to spring waters (210). Her expressed desire speaks almost of a body, trapped in her secret longing for open spaces instead of being part of a conventional social means of wearing hats or veils to hide her woman's face. She talks about being mad, unhappy, shamed, all at the same time, as if she does not know the difference among these words which cannot be distinctive any more, or they don't have a meaning of their own anymore:

> I was mad. It was the madness sent from some God
>
> that cause of my fall.
>
> I am unhappy, so unhappy! Nurse,
>
> cover my face again. I am ashamed
>
> of what I said. Cover me up(241-246).

In the same scene, she actually appears twice, Phaedra enters into an agonistic dialogue (315-350) with her, so sharp and dynamic that it is as if the conflict of words

between the two mirror her inner conflict over whether or not she should expose her love and, therefore, her honour. To the nurse's flood of rhetoric about revealing her secret to Hippolytus, an outraged Phaedra presents the image of a woman fully aware of the conventions linked to women's social lives, and underscores the importance of honour rather than the importance of life. She bursts into confession about women's state of being, and her idea of shame (*aidos*) which she strongly believes should prevail. She calls women the 'object of hate of all', as if the woman's role is only to keep her good reputation, and, in a belittling way, she describes a woman's position in society:

> We know the good, we apprehend it clearly.
> But we can't bring it to achievement. Some
> are betrayed by their laziness, and others
> value some other pleasure above virtue.
> There are many pleasures in a woman's life –
> long gossiping, talks and leisure, that sweet curse.(380-384)

Does Phaedra describe realistically the way women feel and are, or is she an extremely virtuous person, a *sophron*, in a male's world? If she were describing the way women feel, then she, herself, would have accepted things as they are, and then she would have accepted the nurse's reason for revealing her lust to Hippolytus: 'This is high moralizing! What you want is not fine words, but a man!'(490). She is a *sophron* of the city of Athens raving about 'famous Athens – freedom in word and deed'(421), but one who cannot express her free feelings in the land of freedom. Obviously, Phaedra's words expose ambiguities she cannot escape from.

Another controversial comment in her monologue is her reference to two kinds of shame without mentioning them. Critics, for instance Barrett or Cairns, debate on this

subject, but Furley, after a detailed analysis of the exact lines (380-387), concludes that she means, first, the 'virtuous benefits such as wealth' one has to work for, and second 'those which bring gratification through indulgence' such as wine or women[518]. However, he is keen to point out a precise link between *aidos* and social status: 'the aristocrat is in better position to exhibit and possess *aidos* than the penurious'(p. 91). What is inferred from this brief discussion is the fact that, as Furley claims, Phaedra's concern is about her reputation, the virtue which 'is held lovely everywhere, and harvests a good name among mankind'(431-432), according to the chorus.

Phaedra continues to express herself in ambiguous ways which denote her inner conflict, but also her failure to connect with the other she would desire to but does not dare to. The following are a small sample of the many:

> My hands are clean: the stain is in my heart (316).
>
> Her cure has made my illness mortal now (598)
>
> May my curse
>
> light upon you, on you and all others
>
> who eagerly help unwilling friends to ruin (692-694).

Finally, after the agonising conflict she is in, it does not come as a surprise her decision to kill herself, and to accuse Hippolytus to his father as well – acts that are as tragically violent as her inner battle is. When she discovers that the nurse has told Hippolytus of her love for him, and because she thinks 'he will fill all the land with

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[518] W. D. Furley, 'Phaidra's pleasurable '*aidos*' (Eur. *Hipp*.380-7)', *Classical Quarterly* 46(Jan-June 1996), 87-97(p. 90).

my dishonour'(692), she writes the letter she will leave behind – before hanging herself – in which she accuses him of raping her so that his heart

> may know no arrogant joy at my life's shipwreck;
>
> he will have his share in this my mortal sickness
>
> and learn of chastity in moderation (729-731).

Phaedra's perception of honour – of not revealing her feelings in public – controls Hippolytus' life to its end, and causes her final act rounded by ambiguities and destructive contradictions: Phaedra loves Hippolytus but kills him; she objects to her sharing her love with him, but she does not hesitate in showing her hate toward him; she thinks she is virtuous but she is a murderer; she herself wishes to be free but she restricts Hippolytus's freedom; she does not accept her nurse's words for moderation, but she wants to teach him moderation. Phaedra's honour turns her frustration of hidden identity into an act of revenge, and Hippolytus into a innocent prey connected to her through her disconnecting act of teaching him moderation. Or to put it differently, Phaedra's Subject of love transforms into the Other she fights against, as if he is an object of conformity rather than a projection of her own feelings.

Hippolytus's Other, therefore, affects Hippolytus tragically, and her behaviour works as a measure of comparison for his virtuous, honourable, and public self in the social sense of the words.

His performance on stage starts with his socially limited involvement of being Artemis's worshipper until the Other enters his life, and changes it. In his initial appearance, his ambiguities and the notion of being a *sophron* are stressed – elements which indicate the association of his with Phaedra, his counter Other, as if his growing social self slowly adjusts to the presence of Other, as if his adolescent

performing self learns slowly the steps of being an adult performing self of public behaviour.

Hippolytus's first entrance on stage – even more impressive than the one of his 'long farewell'(1455) at the end – is the same as Phaedra's first appearance on stage. Hippolytus emphasises his connection with hunting and open meadows, similar to Phaedra's liking of meadows and her desire for open spaces. He comes on stage not alone but in a custody of friends and servants – just as Phaedra appears surrounded by her women in the palace, and prays to the goddess:

> It was I that plucked and wove this garland,
>
> […]
>
> it is a true worshipper's hand that gives it to you
>
> […].
>
> With no man else I share this privilege
>
> that I am with you and to your words
>
> can answer words.(173-186)

Besides the 'I' of the prayer instead of 'we' – since he urges his friends to follow him – his words affirm his being a worshipper: he walks in the sacred Meadow of Chastity to gather the flowers for Artemis, and to see the bees of her kingdom because he is the 'privileged', not the wicked, to 'hear' her. The picture of his in the meadow cannot fail to remind the audience of another *parthenos* like Hippolytus(1106,1302), Persephone: besides being *parthenos* like him, she is a victim of Hades, the same as he is according to Aphrodite's announced plans (56,57). For now though, ignorant as he is of his fate, Hippolytus considers himself born and not taught to be chaste, or *sophron* (Gill, 'The Articulation of the Self in Euripides' Hippolytus', p. 86), as he says, but, at the same time, he is not unique in exposing his chastity by making it

public. His relation to his goddess is of a performer at the beginning of his social life and the complexities of it. Consequently, he is only able to hear his image through his words, but he is not able to see himself as a subject of his actions and an object of the social setting. He sees himself with the eyes of an adolescent incapable to relate his actions with the actions of others, of an adolescent alone (84), untouched, and ignorant of the Other.

Following this first image of him, still in accordance with Phaedra's presence which shapes Hippolytus's, his dialogue with one of the servants next reveals his own ambiguities, which remind the audience of Phaedra's[519]: because of Hippolytus' display of his devotion to Artemis, the servant is aware that the young man does not pray to all gods as he should, to Aphrodite, at this moment, whose statue is next to Artemis. Hippolytus claims that he cannot worship her because the 'god of nocturnal prowess'(106) is not his goddess since he is chaste. However, two lines before, he agrees with the servant that 'haughty heart breeds arrogant demeanour'(94). Isn't his refusal to pray to Aphrodite a projection of his own 'haughty' heart? Hippolytus displays his *hybris,* but he does not perceive it as an *hybris* but as an act of chastity, just as Phaedra who does not perceive the ambiguity of her words when describing women's place in society in association with her image in the same society, or when she raves about two forms of honour.

After this introductory display of Hippolytus's fragmented behaviour which shows similarities with that of Phaedra's, of a performer at the beginning of his social and public life, his next appearance on stage initiates Hippolytus's encounter with the idea of Other, an experience which, although it connects him with Phaedra, at the same time, it disconnects him from her: in contrast to Phaedra's subjective perception of

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[519] Another similarity between Phaedra and Hippolytus is the fact that at the end (1351-1377), he displays a behaviour of *dystropos harmonia*, the same like the one Phaedra was displaying – full of ambiguities and internal suffering (Zeitlin, *Playing the Other* p.248).

her distant, and therefore frustrating, connection with her Other, he, Hippolytus, demonstrates his socially oriented self whose public dimension does not cause harm to anybody, even though the Other forces her presence onto his.

Specifically, from the beginning until this point, Hippolytus's image in the city's performing terms, is that of a man whose original chastity, this kind of *sophrosyne* found in both men and women[520], in both him and Phaedra, resembles mostly the quality of Athenian aristocrats, the *apragmones*, who detest any involvement of themselves with the masses and public life[521]. His name actually – as it is mentioned in *Clouds* (63-64) with the mother who desperately wants her son to have a name with 'hippo' in it – is an open implication that the man who has it is an elitist, an enemy of democracy, not just of the opposite sex (ibid.). After the Other's invasion into Hippolytus' life, in contrast to his elitism, in contrast to Phaedra's analogous behaviour, his self displays a new appreciation of the virtue of *sophrosyne* in complete agreement with democratic codes of action (ibid., p. 75) and, therefore, at this point, it would be more than inaccurate not to mark this revision Euripides aims at – in the face of young Hippolytus – from the passive virtue of *apragmanosyne* to the spirit of *polypragmosyne* (Thuc. 2.63.3) that the city, through Hippolytus, exposes: his saying, as discussed later, of 'virtues used' marks the advantage of the public self over the private, of the active over the passive, of an agent who acts because he is acted upon, and is acted upon because he acts. His self, besides displaying ambiguities, exposes now a public *ergon* he seems in control of, but one he is too young to realise he is not.

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[520] H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 76,99.
[521] Justina Gregory, *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 1991), p.63.

When Hippolytus, to his horror, is informed by Phaedra's nurse about her mistresses' secret love for him, he no longer expresses his devotion to Artemis as before, he does not display the simple chaste man's portrait as before, but as a *polypragmon*, he is involved in a number of public statements much more socially ostentatious than his previous assertions of his virtues and habits were. He becomes verbal and vocal, and first, he expresses in an almost antagonistic way – as a kind of manifesto – his views against women. Phaedra exists now for him but not as the erotic Other. He echoes like Hesiod, according to Zeitlin, because he 'accedes to the compromise that requires a man to take an other into his house or else forfeit the chance of legitimate offspring he can claim as his own'(p.259). He is a man too loud to be anything but not public from now on, too expressive to be anything but an Athenian from now on. Hippolytus does not refer to himself as such, but to all men, as if he represents all men, as another Medea who sounded as if she was representing all women:

So we might have lived

in houses free of that taint of women's presence.

But now, to bring this plague into our homes

we drain the fortunes of our homes.(623-626)

And then, his idea of virtue speaks, but only in relation to his father and the harm Phaedra and the nurse will cause to him if, as women, they will behave immorally:

Now I will go and leave this house until

Theseus returns from his foreign wanderings,

And I'll be silent. But I'll watch you close.

I'll walk with my father step by step and see

how you look at him.(658-662)

His feelings of horror mirror his father's horror in case Theseus should learn about his wife who Hippolytus wants to teach to be chaste(667).

The youngster's public presence of overtones in connection with his moral concerns continues after the nurse's disappearance, after Phaedra's hanging, and Theseus's awareness of his son's supposed involvement which initiates Hippolytus's defence of himself, mostly out of necessity, and signifies Hippolytus's dealing with a threat, a real force against his life, a stimulus which turns him into active Self of two conflicting identities-values: his virtue which orders him to keep Phaedra's secret, and his need to defend himself. His choice is to keep Phaedra's secret, but to try to defend himself at the same time.

His *ergon* from now on is barely that, as before, of simply another opinionated male citizen who takes pride in speaking on behalf of all men against all women. Presently, he is a defender of his case in court, of an advocate of his rights, before a judge/father who has decided on his predetermined guilt.

To Theseus's accusations that he raped Phaedra – as her letter informs him – and to his sarcastic comments about his son's chastity (949), Hippolytus answers eloquently realizing that the matter he is accused of is not eloquent at all (986) when it 'is bare of words'(985). In that sense, he realises now that he is in front of another self, or that he is part of a self surrounded by roles and challenges he tended to forget under the seal of the worshipper/*parthenos*. Now, he is an illegitimate son and an individual in defence of his honour. And although he dislikes words, particularly those used by demagogues to charm crowds (990), he defends his innocence at length attacking his father's denunciations by intellect and moderation:

> Then tell me how it was *your* wife seduced me:
>
> was it because she was more beautiful

than all the other women in the world?

Or did I think, when I had taken her,

to win your place and kingdom for a dowry

and live in your own house? I would have been

a fool, if I had dreamed it.

Was rule sweet? Never, I tell you, Theseus,

for a wise. [...]

I would wish to be

first in the contests of the Greeks

but in the city I'd take second place. (998-1017)

Hippolytus's reasoning defends convincingly his public awareness of duty, more so when he stresses the idea of friendship to indicate his commitment to those he loves and, therefore, to honour:

I am no railer

at my companions. Those who are my friends

find me as much their friends when they are absent

as when we are together.(999-1003)

Is this the old Hippolytus of the meadows, the unqualified worshipper of Artemis' chastity, her prayer and hunter? Hardly so anymore, since he refers to Gods (996) – instead of one goddess – to women's seduction, to the 'sweet rule' of powerful men, and kingdoms the wise men do not value (1009-1013). He is the man of sacred friendships who uses one premise after the other to defend himself (1021), while, further on, he even has second thoughts on his *sophrosyne*: he admits, as his sentence referring to Phaedra shows, that she found a way to deal with her secret passion – her hanging – and he, in all his *sophrosyne*, since he did not have any passion to hide or to

hang himself for, fails to turn his virtue into a beneficial act for himself: 'virtuous she was in deed although not virtuous: I that have virtue used it to my ruin' (1034-1035). He accepts, in this way, that *sophrosyne* is useless if inactive, a non-functional quality unless it turns into an *ergon* of a city person. And finally, in an ultimate moment of community perception, he judges himself through the gaze of another individual. He is the 'I' who sees his actions, and the 'me' who is seen through his actions and their outcome: 'if I could find another *me* to look me in the face', as he says(1078), expressing his despair over his father's unfair decision to punish him. And once more, he reminds the audience of Phaedra who sees herself through the eyes of the others when she pronounces her code of honour and calls her a 'woman, object of all'(406). Both are connected through a mirror-like image since Phaedra's 'time holds a mirror'(427), the one she uses to project her image of love, deceptive and revealing at the same time, but also to project her hate through time to Hippolytus by visualising the consequences her actions will have on him. And he, as a reversed image of the one projected in Phaedra's *catoptron*, mirrors a self who sees himself through the gaze of others – as Phaedra before him did.

Are the others of Hippolytus's social space capable of seeing and appreciating a socially virtuous performance in Hippolytus's young face, or in judging themselves the way Hippolytus judges his *sophrosyne*, or Phaedra's actions? At the moment, at least his father, since he punishes his son, is not.

Hippolytus's character, after his return from exile, wounded, invalid, but still socially vocal, plays out the last act of the completion of his public *ergon*, his forgiveness of his father who ordered his exile. He is in full knowledge of his father's banishing and cursing of him (1411), but he expresses no more than his pure pity

(1409). In sentences of direct, non-contradictory meanings and connotative terms, he frees his father of guilt:

> The darkness is upon my eyes already.
>
> Father, lay hold on me and lift me up (1444-1445).
>
> No, for I free you from all guilt in this (1449).

His act of forgiving his father, immediately before his death, is of double significance. First, the word *siggignosco* means a sharing act between two people who have knowledge of a problem or situation, and decide to communicate on the basis of this shared knowledge, and on the acceptance of asking the one to forgive the other. In that sense, Hippolytus is in complete accordance with the others' acts; he does not only see himself through the eyes of others, but he becomes the Other. Second, his forgiveness has almost the features of an *agon* between him and the others, between his virtue and the Other's vice, between his innocence and the Other's guilt, in the city scene of private passions and public tears, of hidden motives and deadly messages. Primarily though, his forgiveness has the features of an *agon* between a mortal and Aphrodite, the immortal one, responsible for his death out of an act of revenge, but incapable – as all gods – of forgiveness. Aphrodite dictates his death, but his forgiveness is not dictated by any god. It is his final *agon* as a mortal for achieving his association, through forgiveness, of his image with that of the people`s after his mortal state of performance is dissociated from them.

Hippolytus's *ergon/agon* ends with all the community present – the chorus, his father, and Artemis. The goddess reassures everyone that Hippolytus will continue being alive because she will ask 'unwedded maids before the day of marriage' to cut their hair in his honour'(1425-1426). And, according to Theseus, 'Pallas Athene's

famous city' must lament the loss of such a man'(1460). With the announcement of a ritual of transition in honour of Hippolytus the tragedy ends. Artemis's presence emphasises Aphrodite's absence, and the specific cult, as Sourvinou-Inwood writes, 'in a way, compensate for his failure to acknowledge the need for the transition to full adulthood [...], but he is now, after his death, forever implicated in it.'(329,330)

Hippolytus' life is tragic since the young Self who begins to learn his social performance of solidarity and reciprocity is the One who dies, since the one capable of learning is the one who has to be sacrificed in the spirit of Aphrodite's knowledge of love. His legitimately recognised self, not as brave as Ajax, not as versatile as Odysseus, belongs to the city's legitimate memory or the city's myth of an Hippolytus-like performance, of an individual who, despite his unwillingness to become a socially active self, when he is forced to act, he is more socially oriented than any of the adults around him. Euripides touches a youngster's self, and through perplexing paths of an amalgam of divine wrath, human misconceptions and rules of necessity creates an undersized but total portrait of a self almost like a bright apparition, or an innocent idea expired prematurely because of family ties, and swallowed behind closed chambers of civilised, literate wives.

Concluding the analysis of *Ajax* and *Hippolytus* in this section, it was demonstrated that both male dramatic characters – as the two women characters previously – although they are two different types of performing selves who express their individuality in their own way, they also share characteristics of the performance culture they both project. The image of Other, for example, the impact of the community in the individual's values and life, as well as the ritualistic culture – are all

distinctive elements both male characters share. Yet, if one would like to summarise Sophocles' and Euripides' differences as far as their interpretation of the culture and the model self are concerned, one has to mention that Sophocles deals with an archaic hero, while Euripides with a *parthenos* Hippolytus, and that in the case of Ajax, the community endorses his controversial death, while with Hippolytus, the community is interested in the youngster's fame after death which is caused by them. As such, one might indicate, with a bit of certainty, reasons responsible for the problems some of Euripides' tragedies had in their response by the audience, in contrast to Sophocles' popularity of his plays.

The next two tragedies conclude this chapter, and add the dimension of the polarities of performance to the differences between the performing selves of the two tragedians.

III. The Polarities of Performance

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*[522]

Oedipus, the king of Thebes who has once saved the city from the Sphinx's malicious presence and curse by solving her riddle, in his effort to find out the cause of a new, unprecedented plague his people are suffering from, receives Apollo's word, and discovers eventually that the origin of the city's evil fate is his own self because he, in total ignorance, killed his father and married his mother. Devastated by this fact, he blinds himself and leaves the city.

The previous two sections included plays the main characters of which were of both sexes, and they demonstrated the adjustability and the connection, problematic or not, of the self in the social spectrums of the performance culture presented on stage. In this section, the connection between society and tragedy is demonstrated by two male characters whose performance, besides being actualised in a ritualistic social setting reflecting thus the Athenian culture, and besides including the elements of agency of the performing self – as the previous ones did – is also characterised by a total, fatal form of connection between the city and the individual. As argued, in *Oedipus* Rex and in *The Bacchae,* the character's interpretation of the performance culture affects closely the existence of the city itself, and second, the city's impact on the character's performance makes more than just obvious and possible what Taxidou calls 'the socio-historical reading' (p.62) of the self's consciousness.

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[522] Sophocles, 'Oedipus Tyrannus', ed. and trans. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, in *Sophocles I: Ajax; Electra; Oedipus Tyrannus*. Loeb Classical Library 20 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 323-483.

Both Oedipus and Pentheus are part of the city's performance, as all the four characters were, but they and their actions, more than the others, become part of the history and culture of their city because, as *polypragmones*/statesmen, they decide for the city itself. Because of the responsible, political role they personify, and because, at the same time, they are performers/agents whose choices shape both their city's as well as their family's fate, they actualise on stage, more than the others, the interconnection between family and state, or private and public, and as such, society and tragedy. In the case of Oedipus and Pentheus, the line between private and public ceases to exist – since the public totally affects the private, and vice versa through the dominant role of the statesman.

Yet, although there are no conflicting roles in connection with the city performance the individuals have to confront, as the characters in the previously examined tragedies did to a large extent, Oedipus and Pentheus – similarly to the others – face conflicts since they are performing selves/agents trapped in a conflict against one's own self, a conflict with no Others by the names of Jason, Phaedra, or Odysseus, but a conflict which brings the two characters against their own unknown, ignorant, tragic performing self behind the mask of their performance on the Dionysian stage.

Because of this extreme form of relationship between the city and the individual's self – a connection which reaches levels of polarities – this section is called 'Polarities of Performance'. Oedipus and Pentheus actualise the close dependence between society and tragedy since they actualise on stage the whole spectrum of the characteristics of the performing selves, the agency of the self in a ritualistic social setting, and the differences between Sophocles' and Euripides' perception of the polarities of performance.

In the case of Oedipus, his connection with the city starts before the play begins – when he saves Thebes from the Sphinx. It ends when he leaves the city in order to save it again from the plague. What happens during the play marks the performance of a man whose name, identity, family, and actions are all part of the city's history, present, and future. As such, the discussion which connects Oedipus with the city, and consequently, the analysis of Oedipus's performing self starts with the reference to his name – as a first sign of his particular individuality and relation to the concept of family and *topos*/city, and it continues with the argument concerning the analysis of the performing self.

Unlike the other dramatic characters examined thus far, Sophocles' character refers to himself as 'I who am called Oedipus'(8), instead of 'I am Oedipus'[523] – emphasising the public dimension of a name/identity given to him by those around him; and although he remembers[524] the reasons his name is Oedipus, he, still, eagerly asks if it were a parent who called him so: 'By heaven, did my father or mother name me? Tell me that!'[525] Oedipus may not be alone when asking about the origin of his name; the spectators may actually join him in solving the mystery of his name's meaning which seems to be read as 'swollen foot', but it may as well refer to the 'one who knows the Sphinx's riddle of the foot'[526] – connecting thus his name with the mythology surrounding the city – or it is possible that the word '*pous*' may also

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[523] Voltaire's statement that he cannot admire a tragedian who knew no better than to introduce Oedipus as he did, does not seem to affect the generally held opinion that Sophocles *does* know how to introduce this particular character, and has a very particular reason to introduce Oedipus the way he does (as mentioned by Pietro Pucci, *Oedipus and the Fabrication of the Father* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 67).

[524] He refers to the 'dreadful brand of shame' he had from his 'cradle' (1035), since his 'ankles had been pierced'(1034) by his parents when they abandoned him on Cithaeron with the hope he would die.

[525] His parents' decision to abandon their first-born, as Iocaste recalls, was after an 'oracle came to Laius, not from Phoebus himself, but from his servants'(711-713) saying that Laius would be killed by his child.

[526] Jean Pierre Vernant, 'Ambiguity and Reversal: on the Enigmatic Structure of Oedipus Rex' in, *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, ed. by E. Segal, pp.188-209 (p. 197).

include the questioning word 'where?', and in that case, the name suggests the one who asks questions about various destinations to which he can go – as the questions he had probably asked before his arrival to Thebes – or destinations as answers to not just one, single 'where', but to many, not just one question, but many, not just one mystery, but many, as if 'riddles' read as name and place for him, Oedipus, whose life reads as a question/riddle, and constitutes a multiplicity of riddles relating to the man's birth name, *ergon*, even death[527]. When one of his riddles ends, the other one begins, when he thinks he confronts a solution, another enigma appears, when he adopts a home, he soon realises he has to depart from it, and the moment he thinks he knows who he is or who his parents are, he faces his 'ancient' nightmare: his nameless, timeless[528], cityless, parentless image.

Yet, Oedipus, despite his ever lasting search – even for his name – is, as argued, an individual who, like an Athenian statesman, is responsible for the well being of his city through his *ergon/agon*, and totally aware of the fact that he has to go along with a name attached to him since birth, as a stigma he never chose to have[529], but beyond anything else, he has to continue living with the alarming realisation that the one responsible for the others' suffering is not another Other but his own familiar self in the role of the other.

In the following pages, Oedipus's character will be delineated through his social, antagonistic, conflicting, ambiguous acts as a man who behaves as if he is in control

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[527] Oedipus's death in *Oedipus at Colonos* is presented in a highly ambiguous way.
[528] Zeitlin in 'Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama', (p. 153) calls Oedipus's incest with his mother 'an act which destroys time'.
[529] The oracle about his fate since birth does not say *if* these things happen, but that they *will* happen; so the oracle is unconditional, as E. R. Dodds emphasises ('On Misunderstanding the Oedipus Rex', p. 181).

of his own actions. His ceremonial city *ergon* will first be discussed – his interconnection and his responding to the others' needs – which initiates the unravelling of his ambiguous state of existence, and thus of an *ergon* turning into the *agon* of a Self/Other who in ignorance, has broken both civil and natural laws. The last part of the analysis of Oedipus concentrates on revealing Oedipus's responsibility, one he totally chooses as his, and one which leads him to realms of existence far beyond Theban ones, and yet, completely identical with his Theban origins, the city he longs to control – all according to Sophocles of the Athenian culture.

First, the social dimension of Oedipus is emphasised at the first scene. Without pursuing the idea of Oedipus as being a model of Athenian statesmen[530], nevertheless, it is true that Sophocles draws obvious lines of connection between mythical Thebes and present Athens since they both suffer from the effects of plague[531]. The Athenians would not have missed thinking of their own plague – described by Thucydides (2.47 -54, 3.87) as having devastating effects on the people and the city – while attending the suffering of people on stage. And they certainly would not have missed seeing the projection of their own city on stage when hearing references to two temples devoted to Athena as early as line 20. And beyond the temples, the Athenians see also a reflection of what they are so familiar with: Sophocles synthesises a city scene, a combination of a religious and city ritual the people of Thebes – as the people of Athens – perform in order to exorcise any hostility against their city expressed through something as grievous as the plague. The altars[532], the sound of paeans, and

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[530] The idea is claimed by Victor Ehrenberg in *Sophocles and Pericles* (London: Blackwell, 1954) and B. M. Knox in *Oedipus at Thebes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 39.
[531] For most historians, the date of the play's performance is around 429 – 25, the time of the plague during the Peloponnesian War.
[532] The altars are called by the priest 'your altars'(16) – Oedipus's – but later (184), the priest calls them Apollo's.

the smell of incense emphasise the religious aspects of the ritual, while the civic centrality of the event is emphasised by the reference to being in the agora location. The suppliants with chaplets are there to pray to gods, but they are also there to expose their suffering to their leader, Oedipus.

Indeed, whether *Tyrannus* or *Rex*[533], Oedipus, as presented in the opening scene, is a model of a city leader 'willing to render every kind of aid'(12), stating that his 'children's(6) sufferings are his, his sake is the city's(252), as if they should know that 'none is as sick as'(59) he is because of their sufferings. Oedipus thinks of his city from the beginning of his presence on stage, and all the way – 'Think of the city! The city!'(629) – until the end when he leaves the city of his father(1450) where he 'enjoyed the greatest luxury'(1380). As for the city, it recognises the 'ruler' whose comments become their comments – just as their sickness becomes his – for the sake of this land that is 'nothing without men who live in it'(56-57). He does not even hesitate – showing elements of a democratic leader – to hear Creon's[534] news from Delphi[535] which concerns the plague, there, before the people's scrutiny, and not in the palace (91,92) because he 'laments for these people more than' (994) he laments for his own life.

The Sophoclean character, unlike Seneca's Oedipus, does not waste time in long monologues inspiring an atmosphere of terror, promoting his esoteric problems rather than the people's concern about the plague[536]; in fact, his speeches are shorter than the

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[533] The title of the tragedy is either the one or the other: 'tyrant' is the one who, by Greek standards, does not inherit power, but takes it by force based on his deeds; 'king' suggests an inherited title which, in the case of Oedipus, is true once the facts of his birth are known. Therefore, both titles are correct. (Thomas van Nortwick, *Oedipus: The Meaning of a Masculine Line* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1998), p.23.

[534] Jocaste's brother

[535] It was Apollo's oracle – to drive 'out from the land a pollution, one that has been nourished in this country' (95-98) – the one which leads to Oedipus, the killer of Laius, as the pollution 'nourished in this country', and the one responsible for the people's sufferings.

[536] Charles Segal, *Oedipus Tyrannus: Tragic Heroism and the Limits of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 21.

priest's. He is there to see, hear, and to ask. His first 'why'(2) is only second to 'children' – penetrating, demanding – asking about the plague; his last is about his fate (1391) – asking why he was not left to the mountains to die.

As for the suppliants, they do not hesitate to call him, 'mightiest man in the sight of all', 'the first of men', the one with the 'extra strength', 'the best of living'(30-46) – the one who is not there to listen, pity, and ask, but to 'raise up the city [...] on account of the energy you showed before'(46). Their words describe a winner in a land of victims, a man with no competitors whose power is rational, whose energy is spiritual, whose ability is mental, the mighty mental ability he demonstrated when he freed them of the Sphinx by solving her riddle, becoming thus their undeniable saviour. The people's double urge – 'raise up the city' – is a reminder of that old mental victory of his against the omens oppressing their city, a message of happy memory instead of the grievous sight of the present omens around them. Oedipus's reassurance that he knows their grief is a reassurance of his previous knowledge, of his old lifting of the city, of his surviving willingness to save, to interconnect the old energy with the new woes, to rationalize their agony with his passionate determination to seek the truth.

And he acts his *ergon* for them, first in his mind, then with his orders[537], and now with his coming to them. He is an active political being, a leader of duty in the eyes of the priest[538], a tyrant[539] the community trusts, a man of power with the power of

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[537] He has ordered Creon to go to Delphi.

[538] In his highly influential 'On Misunderstanding the *Oedipus Rex*' (p.179), E. R. Dodds analyses the 'misunderstood' concept of the Aristotelian *hamartia* as related to Oedipus, and as used by 'moralising critics'. To the question, 'Did Sophocles intend us to think of Oedipus as a good man?' he answers 'yes' because in this opening scene everybody treats Oedipus as 'the darling of the city'. and Dodds continues: 'Aristotle uses the term to mean offence committed in ignorance free from *kakia* (sinful intention)'.

[539] According to Jean-Pierre Vernant, (in 'Ambiguity and Reversal', p. 200), expressions such as 'the strongest' applied to a tyrant, such as Oedipus, are quite common applied to gods as well, during the fifth and fourth centuries (e.g. *The Trojan Women*, 1169)

people[540]. His *ergon* is their comfort, and their cries transform into his *agon* of the finding of the polluter/Other of the city who, according to the Apollonian oracle, has killed king Laius.

Oedipus's performing *ergon* – his inquiring into people's suffering, the causes of it, and the ways to end it – does not reflect a momentary reaction to one grave city problem. Oedipus's *ergon* is his strikingly unique interconnection with the city – as powerful as any social *and* political *and* emotional *and* physical interconnection can be. Oedipus's Thebes is not taken for granted as it would have been by someone born into it, as it is with most other tragic characters. Oedipus deserves the city, and the city deserves him, an outsider the city turns into an insider.

When at the end of the play, Oedipus is ready to depart from Thebes, he insists that he cannot look again upon the city from which he 'had enjoyed the greatest luxury'; by 'greatest luxury' he most certainly means the position at the highest point of the hierarchy of the city. But for him, ruling does not seem to be a kind of detached luxury, but involvement – social, political, emotional, physical. Oedipus's 'greatest luxury' could be this involvement when interpreted as a mental, active *ergon.*

And also, for him, 'greatest luxury' might be – or might have been – the luxury to be *in* and remain *in* a city, as a kind of staying stillness, away from 'ancient grief '(1033), and 'things terrible and sad'(790). In Thebes, Oedipus forgets the shame of the leg – the 'ancient grief' – feels safe from Apollo's oracle[541] – the 'terrible' things – and lives without thinking of the physical shame and the social shame, but lives and makes others live, because of his talent for solving riddles. All these in Thebes. How can he not call 'the greatest luxury' his interconnection with the city? How can his *ergon* for the city not be anything but an *ergon* for his own well-being? And how

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[540] John Gould, 'The Language of Oedipus', in *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange*, pp.244-262 (250).
[541] The one according to which he will kill his father and marry his mother.

afterwards – when he finds out about his ill-being – after all this luxury of forgetfulness and the victory he experiences because of the city, how can he not punish himself with his other *ergon*, his exile and blindness[542] in order to be politically, socially, emotionally, and physically detached from the city he once deserved?

But whose city of reward? The instant the ultimate performer of inquiry energises his regular code of action – knowing the problem/stimulus, confronting it, solving it – he energises another code – time – that he never feels at ease with. Once more – or *ever* more – time stops, or Oedipus stops it, and starts his *ergon* of inquiry to find the polluter/Other of the city. But the moment he starts it, he himself starts counting backwards, and the *ergon* becomes an inquiry to find what happened to him from the time of his birth to the now. And the riddle of knowing who he is becomes a ritual of riddles and codes read backwards, reviewed as oracles and events thought to be just matters of coincidence, and codes of knowledge turning out to be gruesome forms of ignorance. In that sense, the inquiry Oedipus initiates turns into a ritual of passage from ignorance to knowledge, from ignoring the Other, to knowing the Other – his Other Self.

Yet, before analysing Oedipus's Other Self, his *ergon* of inquiry turned into a ritual of passage needs to be analysed since it is this *ergon* which leads him to finding his other self.

As such, first, the space in front of the palace on stage can be compared with an open court room and an altar at the same time since Oedipus's inquiry takes place here, and since Oedipus's total exposure of his guilt and his personal miseries – offering himself totally and unconditionally to the scrutiny of others – starts from

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[542] The decision to blind himself and go into exile are all his as he says, and as will be analysed shortly.

here. As Rehm[543] argues, the scene on stage 'accommodates civic business' when Creon reports his findings from going to Delphi (78-150), 'legal proclamation' when Oedipus condemns the killer of Laius(216-275), 'political accusation and defence' when Creon and Oedipus exchange words of suspicion (512-623), and 'appeals to gods' when Iocaste supplicates to Apollo (911-923) for her husband's 'peace of mind'.

Second, Oedipus, in order to find the guilty one responsible for the plague, initiates a dialogue/communication first with the gods (Apollo, Tiresias), second with his family (Jocaste), third with the city (the messenger and the shepherd), and simultaneously with himself – his memories and nightmares – a dialogue which links all the other dialogues into one, and 'converts the diachronic unfolding of events into a synchronic simultaneity'(Rehm, 233).

Besides the space and the elements of communication which can remind the audience of a ritual, Oedipus is involved in an *ergon*, which seems like a code of action and of social practices expressed as such by turning first to gods, continuing with his *oikos*, and finishing with the people from the city – following thus a ceremonial process of inquiry, a scheme of events respected and recognised by all.

Therefore, first, he asks for Apollo's oracle/advice as to what he should do about the plague, and continues with his inviting Tiresias to come in the city and prophesy about the events. And the entire spectrum of the riddle of Oedipus's conflicting identities occurs firstly with Tiresias's words to Oedipus:

> The man you have long been looking for [...] is here!
>
> He is thought to be a stranger who has migrated here,
>
> but later he shall be revealed to be a native Theban

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[543] *The Play of Space*, p.217, 218.

> [...] And he shall be revealed as being to his children
> whom he lives with both a brother and a father, and to
> his mother both a son and a husband, and to his
> father a sharer in his wife and a killer (449-460).

With the end of Tiresias's lines and the beginning of the chorus's words asking each other 'who is he?'(463), Oedipus – mocking Tiresias's prophesies – turns to his *oikos* to find the answers, and, right there, in front of all, he asks Iocaste about Laius's killers since – according to Apollo – the killer is the polluter. Iocaste remembers the oracle about Laius's killing of his son, and their decision to let their baby boy die on the mountain because of the oracle. His wife's words, and Oedipus's personal confessions and revelations[544] seem to reassure Oedipus that he is not Laius's murderer (842-858) as he thought he was when hearing Iocaste's revelations.

Yet, the inquiry is not over for him since the polluter is not found, and therefore, Oedipus insists on performing the last act of the ceremonious city ritual of inquiry and riddles in front of the city. Now, he turns to the people, and a messenger first, and a shepherd later, to answer his questions – as if they are in a court, and they report events as they witness them, or as they have heard them. And their facts reveal, beyond any doubt – the origin of the polluter of Thebes (1182). Specifically, a messenger from Corinth announces that Polybus is dead, and that Oedipus is not his son[545]. In the meantime, the shepherd Oedipus calls to tell him about the baby that Laius and Iocaste had given their servant to let die on the mountain, eventually(1171)

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[544] Iocaste's words about Laius's murder make Oedipus remember his involvement in a murder – of Laius's as it turns out – before his coming to Thebes, and while trying to reassure himself of the coincidence between the events of his life and the events Iocaste recalls, he tells her about his father Polybus, the king of Corinth, and his own decision to leave Corinth because of a rumour that he was not his father's son. He went to Delphi to find the truth which was that he would kill his father, thus, as he confesses, instead of returning to Corinth, he had come to Thebes.

[545] Iocaste, realising the grievous facts about Oedipus being her son and also her husband, goes inside the palace and hangs herself.

reveals that he gave the baby to the messenger from Corinth, and that Oedipus is the baby/son of Laius and Iocaste.

So, Oedipus's ceremonious, public, open, city ritual of inquiry is complete, and his *ergon* of helping the city, once more, is complete, but what or whom Oedipus faces now – because of his *ergon* – is not the same as before; and as such, Oedipus along with the city, or because of the city, goes from ignorance to knowledge, from being the subject/initiator of the inquiry to becoming the object/other of his inquiry in order to return as both – subject and object – as a self whose consciousness – through his going back into time and space with the help of the city – 'converts the diachronic unfolding of events into a synchronic simultaneity' (Rehm, p.233) of his performing self in complete awareness of his being.

What[546] Oedipus is cursed with, is beyond his knowledge: it is pure ignorance[547]. But because of what he searches for, and because what he searches is his, he confronts his double-faced, contrasting roles, as living echoes of the prophecies since birth. His performing self is not only the hunter of Laius's murderer but the hunted one, not only the tyrant but the scapegoat[548] of his people, not only the one who searches – *zetein* (278, 450, 658, 1112) – but the one who is searched – *zetoumenon* – not only the

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[546] Oedipus has committed two crimes, patricide and incest. But, according to Fox ('The Virgin and the Godfather' in *Anthropology and Literature*, p. 132), in his analysis of the Greeks' 'royal conception of kinship', patricide is Oedipus' primary crime; the oracle demands 'the discovery of the murderer of Laius' in order to 'lift the plague from Thebes', and the text, always according to Fox, does not mention the incest. He adds that incest was certainly considered a crime, but not in the case of the Theban plague. Nevertheless, since Oedipus places his two crimes together, does not separate them, and wants to turn away from them both, I call them both his crimes.

[547] The twin concepts of ignorance and responsibility are examined frequently in the case of Oedipus; and to the question of whether he is a 'puppet' in the hands of gods, the answer is that he is not, and he does what he can (Rush Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre*, p. 109). The most satisfactory answer is given by Dodds ('On Misunderstanding the *Oedipus Rex*, p.182) who refers to the Greek concept of 'free agent', by saying that although the archaic heroes have 'predetermined lives' nobody among the spectators would have assumed that this fact would have prevented them from being free agents at the same time. And Arnold Gomme (*More Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 211) states that 'the gods know the future, but they do not order it'.

[548] Jean-Pierre Vernant, 'Ambiguity and Reversal' , p.200.

civilised man of city but the being of mountains[549]. He is 'like a *daimon*' (Vernant, p. 195), or the chorus's 'close to nothingness'(1186), or the 'anomalous third number' of the Sphinx riddle 'which bridges the gap between the four and the two [...] the differentiating term between bestial and human' (C. Segal, p. 215); or to quote Nietzsche, he is 'the terrible triad of Oedipean fates [...] who [...] must break the consecrated tables of the natural order [...], must experience nature's disintegration'[550].

From the beginning, Oedipus' double existence of being the Self and Other is surrounded by ambiguities[551] as predetermined shadows or burdens, with his name being merely the most obvious one. To mention only some, in the first spectacular city scene, Oedipus appears both 'magnified and isolated'[552], the superior saviour of the people's woes, but also, the one standing alone, as an outsider, as if detached from all the insiders, the 'children, latest to be reared from the stock of Cadmus'(1), according to him who is not. But, in fact, he is not only a child of the 'stock of Cadmus', but he is too much of Cadmus's child himself. Besides, the word 'stock'(*trophe*) Oedipus uses 'collectively as nurture' is the most basic benefit a civilized 'house offers to its offspring', a benefit Oedipus has not received, but, as a city saviour, he wants to offer to Thebes which it is unable to offer to its young ones for now[553]. Another dominant ambiguity concerns the *skeptron*[554] Oedipus carries because of his crippling, the same one used by a ruler as a symbol of power, the very instrument he kills his father with, the one which probably helped him to visualize the

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[549] Charles Segal ('Oedipus Tyrannus' in *Tragedy and Civilization*, p.221) points out that to the Greeks, as is known from various texts, the child belongs to the 'raw' world, being 'irrational, unable to speak, not yet in full command of his bodily functions. a beast', in other words.

[550] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy', in *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. by Francis Golfing (Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1892; repr. 1956), p.61.

[551] As written before, the play is literally loaded with ambiguities only a portion of which will be mentioned here for reasons of space.

[552] Gould, 'The Language of Oedipus' in *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange*, p.248.

[553] Segal 'Oedipus Tyrannus', p.208.

[554] It means 'staff, sceptre, and cane'(ibid, p.222)

Sphinx's riddle, but also the permanent third leg he, blinded and disoriented, leaves the city with, his only support in his new world of darkness, the one he does not have to see to know he holds it, almost as a part of his body. And lastly, when Oedipus says and means that he will find the polluter of the city, and that he 'shall begin again and light up (*phano*) the obscurity'(132), the syntax of the sentence permits the interpretation of his saying as 'I myself will discover myself criminal' (Vernant, p. 193). As for the next sentence 'I shall drive away the pollution; whoever killed him may well wish to turn the same violence against me'(139-141), it not only sounds ambiguous but tragic in all his ignorance, because the violence turns against him.

What Oedipus is cursed to do in total ignorance, and what he does in full knowledge[555] – his two diametrically different beings therefore – are two completely antithetical acts, but had he committed any crime on stage, in full knowledge, it would also have been perceived as diametrically different from the one done off stage – if Oedipus was ever on trial in an Athenian court. In fact, he is perceived as if the worst of crimes he has committed do not make him a polluter among his people. Despite the danger of infection, when Oedipus asks the Thebans to touch him(1414), nobody, not even Creon, reacts against his wish, guiding him eventually inside the palace(1424), letting him later touch[556] also his daughters/ sisters(1466).

Why then does Oedipus perceive himself as a polluter even though his city does not? Why does he say: 'I beg you, hide me somewhere abroad, or kill me, or hurl me

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[555] When he blinds himself, he says: 'no other hand struck my eyes, but my own miserable hand!'(1331-1332), and as all scholars agree, this sentence, among others, means clearly that Oedipus takes responsibility for the acts on stage; besides, Apollo's prophesy was about the two crimes off stage.

[556] Taplin (*Greek Tragedy in Action*, p.66) is disturbed by the idea of Oedipus' touching by others, to such an extensive degree, as he says, and he refers to the 'apparent contradiction between his terrible pollution and all this contact with others'. His most satisfactory answer is that Sophocles allows 'the demands of emotive pathos to override meticulous religiosity'.

into the sea, where you shall never again see me'(1410-1412)? And why can he not see anything 'with pleasure'(1335) any more?

Because Oedipus *did* commit these acts off stage. Because killing his father is the worst of crimes[557] for Greeks. Because his act reveals to him the law of the biological father, his father, 'as the principle of one's being and status – identified with the voice of gods'[558]. Because in ignorance or in no ignorance, off stage or on stage, he is named as his father's murderer and his mother's husband. And now, because of his act, he is this paradox of man 'the best and the basest' (C. Segal, p. 227), the man whose life is no more than some kind of a 'poetic figure always threatening to collapse' (Segal, p. 242), and he who is called Oedipus, who or what is left of him, is the one and no one else who says: 'no human being who can bear my woes but I'(1414-1415). Or to put it simply, because, as Dodds writes in his memorable study, Oedipus perceives himself as a polluter, and 'Sophocles had not read Freud, but he knew how people are filled with instinctive horror '(p.184), about committing such acts, regardless of intention.

Oedipus behaves in a guilty manner because he feels guilty. The off-stage act – his *ergon?* – makes him guilty, and he behaves as guilty. Does it matter now whether or what he knew then, or after, or before, or now? What does he know? Does he know?

Oedipus's knowledge lasts until the knowledge of his ignorance begins. His 'O light, may I look on you for the last time'(1183) ends his solving of riddles and inquiries, and begins his days of ignorance/ blindness, synonymous with his guilt, of a new Other Oedipus whose gaze of others perceive him as 'close to nothingness', as the man who 'restored' them to life, and now he 'lulled their eyes in death'(1221-22). This Oedipus, their Oedipus, in all his 'nothingness' of identities, in all his no

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[557] Plato, *Laws*,872cff.
[558] Pucci, *Oedipus and the Fabrication of the Father*,p.2.

identities, overwhelms him, and as a response to their response towards him, turns him into the Other who cannot see himself with the gaze of others, and makes him choose to be blind – with all the horror of his perceiving the unprecedented reality of his own self.

His act of blinding himself may also be perceived as another act of his 'I' for searching, not for the others but for his own Other Self this time, of starting a new *ergon* in his effort to solve the riddle of the previous illusions – that is, of thinking of solving without solving, of thinking of running away from his destiny only to go closer to it, of marrying Iocaste who was his mother, of having daughters who turned out to be sisters, of hunting for the killer only to learn that he was hunting himself. Oedipus's blindness makes him obliged to take into consideration whom or what he cannot perceive, what he cannot see, what he could not know – a darkness of a physical world he took for granted, or the light he thought he was seeing which was only lighting his illusion.

At the same time, he asks Creon to 'cast ' him out of Thebes (1436), and to let him 'live in the mountains'(1452) – relating thus himself, as always, totally with the city, not only as a member of a miserable family, but as a citizen/polluter punishing himself with one of the worst punishments – of being *apolis,* in exile. Indeed, as reflected in many tragedies[559], and as displayed soundly in rituals such as Panathinea, and in myths related to Athenian autochthony, the 'integral relationship between Athenian identity and the land of Attica' becomes a political weapon directed towards the non-autochthones, and projected itself to the idea of ostracism – an Athenian *demos* practice to expel citizens suspected of being a danger to the city (Rehm, p.59). As such, the Athenian audience, sympathising with Oedipus's miseries, are at the

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[559] In Aeschylus *Agamemnon,* Aegisthus refers to the 'empty hopes' of those in exile(1668), and in tragedies such as Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Euripides' *Electra, Andromache, Helen,* and *Phoenician Women* among other tragedies, the theme of exile is quite prominent.

same time, aware of the consequences his act of polluting the city would have had on his relation with the city from then on.

Before leaving the city, Oedipus, just as in the opening scene, acts as always before – he makes decisions, gives orders, and decides for the members of his family. He asks Creon to bury Iocaste (1446), to care for his daughters (1462) and to let them touch him (1470). He is the one to tell Creon what to do, and finally makes Creon protest: 'Do not wish to have control in everything! Power to control did not accompany you through all your life!'(1523, 1524).

And Oedipus, with his devastating experience in darkness, penetrating the mind and body of him – the infant of the mountains and the man of the city, the son of Laius and Polybus, the self and his Other, as drastic and impulsive as all before, leaves the stage[560], as if there is nothing more to say, as if nothing more is out there in the open, seen space where he has exhausted the appearance of an illusion of a man called Oedipus, of a self performing his extraordinary presence.

To conclude the analysis of Oedipus's character, he is a self who, during the time he tries to save Thebes from the plague, learns about his parents, his origins, and his previous acts – a truth horrifyingly antithetical to that which he had believed up to now. Oedipus changes his perception not only of his interactions with others, but of the way he will perceive his own self from now on, and, true always to himself and to the others, he underlines this different perception not only with words but with acts, not only towards the others, but towards himself, by causing his own blindness. And perhaps so as he thinks, his self performing in the dark might be less ignorant than his old self performing in full light.

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[560] The focus of the last scene is usually on Oedipus' words of taking responsibility for his own acts, but the act of blindness and the interpretation of it should receive equal or even more attention than his words.

Oedipus Rex is not just another of Sophocles' characters underlining the connections between city performance and stage performance. He is a character/epitome of the integral connection between the individual and the city, between the individual of the public roles and of the performing self, and therefore, between the performing self and the performance culture. Oedipus performs an *ergon* for the city turning it into an *ergon* for himself – the searching of his self's awareness in his integral relationship with the social/political space of his existence, as if the one – the awareness of self – cannot exist without the other – the city; and the polarities of Oedipus's performance demonstrate the ways a human being struggles between the polarities of natural and cultural laws, and challenges beyond human reach.

For Sophocles, therefore, as the analysis of *Electra, Ajax,* and *Oedipus Rex* has demonstrated, the characters' perception of the state can be seen as an organic one, a relationship in which the becoming of the character/performing self depends on the being of the social environment of the self. Especially in the case of Oedipus, but also in the case of Electra and Ajax, their subjectivity can be perceived through their awareness of the community, and as such, the 'opposition between the self and the other ceases to exist'(Taxidou, p.61), and becomes a self's consciousness.

Sophocles' archaic and mythological characters can, in turn, be seen as the creations of an organic relationship between Sophocles and Athens during the years between the glorious Persian wars, and the disastrous Peloponnesian war; and his characters' search and dilemmas may be seen as artistic dilemmas about the fragility of human existence in a city which, in all its socially articulate performance culture, is subject to natural laws or instincts, such as blood ties, death, plague, and wars. All three characters epitomise the ways Sophocles transforms the society's cultural determinants into visual and vocal presences of tragic characters attended to and voted

on as such by the Athenians during the Dionysian festival. Euripides's *Bacchae*, considered next, will finalise Euripides's perceptions of the principles of performance of his characters on stage, and the dilemmas they raise in relation to the city culture.

Euripides' *The Bacchae*[561]

Dionysus arrives at Thebes to establish his worship. Besides driving the Theban women mad into the mountains, he bewitches king Pentheus because the latter refuses to accept Dionysus as god, and then leads Pentheus, disguised as a maenad, to the mountains where his own mother, being possessed by Dionysus, tears her son to pieces.

That *The Bacchae* is historically a distinctive tragedy is a fact worth emphasizing. Written in Macedonia by a self-exiled Euripides, it is his last play, and the last Athenian tragedy of the Athenian stage[562]. That it actualises on stage the Athenian performing culture by embodying a theatrical ritual within the theatrical ritual/performance is a theatrical event/projection of the performance culture worth analysing. Specifically, the previously analysed tragedies actualise on stage the

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[561] *Euripides V: The Bacchae (The Complete Greek Tragedies (9 volumes))*, ed by David Green and Richmond Lattimore, trans. by William Arrowsmith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, London,1968)

[562] As Taxidou writes, the last of Euripides' plays are written 'without state sanction and funding'(p.13). In her studying of mourning as a concept wholly connected to Athenian tragedy, the author traces its beginning with Aeschylus's *The Persians*, and its end with *The Bacchae*; as she writes, 'Atossa's mourning in *The Persians* is associated with femininity and otherness [...] while with Pentheus, it 'turns into a name, [...] a fact. And she concludes that 'Atossa and Pentheus can be read as mirror images, standing at the respective wings of the Athenian stage: one at the entrance and the other at its exit.' (159,160)

performance culture through the characters' social roles and practices, the community's ritualistic presence, as well as the characters' individuality expressed by the self's interpretation of the performance culture; in *The Bacchae*, Euripides creates a Dionysus, in full presence, as a commander of the action of the story – not as a god/goddess present in one scene as in *Ajax* or *Hippolytus* – who actualises a theatrical ritual within the play/ritual by transforming himself into a director through the wearing of a mortal's mask. In turn, since it is his in-person ritual within a ritual devoted to him, the theatrical performance, all characters, Pentheus primarily, transform into another character, gender, or age through the wearing of a mask on top of the mask the actors wear to play the roles in Euripides' play: Cadmus and Tiresias transform from old to young, Pentheus transforms from man to woman, Agave transforms from being a mother to becoming a maenad, and the hunter Pentheus transforms into his mother's prey – actualising thus on stage, besides the concept of transformation, the concept of unity connected entirely with the worship of Dionysus in his main role of uniting all, such as young and old, men and women, and the natural with the civic world.

Directed and possessed by the god of the theatre and the reversed roles, of the intruding divinity in his becoming the city's favourable insider, of the performer and the performed upon, the characters, being in a state of ecstatic confusion where the limits between self and other are beyond their mental reach and control, play in the god's game/ritual/*ergon* within the *ergon* on stage, while the audience – as the god announces to them – watch the predetermined, ceremonious, Dionysian funeral of Pentheus – the consequence/punishment of his individualistic performance against the god.

Indeed, although Dionysus announces his wrath against Thebes[563] and his determination to destroy it, it is Pentheus, the king against whom he plots his *ergon* disguised into a mortal: Pentheus solely resists the worshipping of this god, and it is the god who calls him 'a man, and nothing more, he presumed to wage a war with god' (636-637).

As such, because of Pentheus's resistance, and because of the fact that his close relationship to the city affects the city by what he does, he, as a character of a tragedy – along with and beyond the dynamics of the ritual's theatricality – can be compared with Oedipus in terms of a character's integral connection to his city, and second, in terms of his main role – that of *polypragmon*/statesman. In *The Bacchae,* as in the case of Oedipus, public and private, or family and state become one, and Pentheus does not have to confront conflicting roles. Yet, similarly to Oedipus, Pentheus, as a performing self/agent, has to face his own self in the role of his Other ignorant self.

And because of Pentheus's ignorance – as will be demonstrated – his connection to the city is fatal rather than organic, and therefore, the relationship between the two is turned to pieces – just as Pentheus's body is torn to pieces. While in *Oedipus Rex*, the city is saved because of Oedipus's responsibility and awareness of his obligations despite his tragic fate away from the city, in *The Bacchae*, Pentheus is killed by his own mother, and the city suffers from the god's wrath. Yet, because of the relationship between the two, Pentheus, as Oedipus before, will be analysed primarily as a performing self whose interpretation of the performance culture affects closely the existence of the city itself, and the city's impact on the character's performance makes his awareness of the self synonymous with his awareness of the city's performance in connection with the worship of Dionysus. And since the relationship

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[563] As Dionysus announces to the audience, he will punish Thebes because his mother's, Semele's, sisters do not recognise him as a god: they claim that she slept with a common man and not with Zeus as she has claimed (26-31, 41-42).

between the two has reached extreme levels of connections, Pentheus's tragedy belongs in the same section with that of Oedipus.

Therefore, the same as with *Oedipus Rex*, the analysis of Pentheus begins with the reference to his name and his origin which demonstrates his close relationship with the city, and continues with the analysis of his performing self within the ritualistic *topos* of the god's game which demonstrates Euripides' interpretation of the Athenian performance culture through Pentheus's performance – affecting as it does the existence of the social setting surrounding him on stage.

First, unlike Oedipus's ambiguous name or no name, Pentheus's means simply 'man of sorrow'[564] – an association with his tragic fate turning out to be the city's fate as well. Furthermore, he, unlike Oedipus, is more than eager to declare (507,1118) his stable, royal identity as the 'son of Echion and Agave'. In that sense – connecting himself to the ruling class of Thebes – he resembles Oedipus's foremost position in the same city, while his foolish (359) attempt to save Thebes, not from the plague, but from Dionysus, who 'infects' Theban women and 'pollutes our beds' (354), does not in the slightest resemble Oedipus's awareness of and direct resolving of his people's sufferings according to the people's wishes as expressed to him.

Yet, the ambiguity surrounding Pentheus is the same as the ambiguity surrounding Oedipus, because, although he is the one 'born to Echion', is the grandson of Cadmus, acts for the city, and is killed by his mother, the play he performs in is the *Bacchae*[565],

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[564] Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, ' Tragedy and Religion: The *Bacchae*', in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, p.370-389, p. 383.

[565] Florence Dupont, in *The Invention of Literature* trans. by Janet Lloyd (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) claims that the *Bacchae* 'turned drama into the cultural equivalent of that ritual of feminine possession' (78). This is the conclusion she reaches after making an analysis of the two faces of Dionysus as he appears in Greece: the masculine god of wine, and the feminine god who drives women entranced to the mountains; it is this second Dionysus, according to her, that was transformed into the Dionysus of the theatrical performance in Athens: 'in the *Bacchae*, the feminine experience of possession was converted into a theatrical convention and thereby became accessible to

not '*Pentheus*'. Is he not the primary performer? Does Euripides play a trick on Pentheus as Dionysus does? Is Pentheus just a figure to expose Dionysus's sovereignty rather than a character with the legitimate right to supply a tragedy with its most legitimate title?

Pentheus *is* the tragedy's legitimate character, but he is also Dionysus's toy; Euripides plays a trick on Pentheus by not calling the tragedy *Pentheus*, but he also exposes the necessity of a city religion Pentheus is too unwise to perceive. As it is, carrying the ambiguities within it and pointing out Pentheus's[566]own state of ambiguity between being a man and a woman, between a hunter and a hunted one, and between being a king and a slave, Dionysus's, the title stands between the child/victim[567] and the god/*daimon* – since the *Bacchae*[568] are the women of Thebes, but are also Dionysus's followers, being what each of the two cousins[569] – Pentheus and Dionysus – are separately: victims of the god possessed by him, as Pentheus is, but also creatures of Pentheus's death[570], as Dionysus is.

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men as it was to women'. Dupont's views are always fascinating, but, at this point, it is only necessary to be said that the *Bacchae* is more than a tragedy which demonstrates simply 'feminine possession'; it demonstrates Dionysus's possession of all – women and men alike – as part of the god's forceful city presence.

[566] Interestingly enough, Pentheus has no '*commos*, no lyric song with chorus' as all major characters usually have' (Jennifer March, 'Euripides the Misogynist?' 'in *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality*, ed. by Anton Powell (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.32-75, p.61). Still, since he initiates the action, and he dies because of it, he can easily have the title of the major character of the tragedy.

[567] According to certain views (e. g.: R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948) p.160, 55, 58), Pentheus, seen from a rather psychological point of view, carries within him the god's performance as well, and his rivalry with the god is a kind of battle against himself, he who desires to have the god's sovereignty, but who suppresses it for the 'sake of citizenry', and that he is a kind of Bacchant on his own who has to die. Significant though this view is, it seems that Pentheus's real, obvious fight against Dionysus is as legitimately normal as it could be.

[568] As Rosenmeyer ('Tragedy and Religion: The *Bacchae*', p. 380) observes, the odes of women need particular attention as they are of the 'finest lyrics' ever to be found in the tragedies – a mixture of 'simplicity and excitement' which, additionally, exposes the chorus's ambiguous position of 'half-hearted participation and distant moralizing' as if Euripides is not quite sure of women's entire performance on and off stage.

[569] Dionysus's and Pentheus's mothers are sisters, Semele and Agave.

[570] Gould ,'Mother's Day: A Note on Euripides' *Bacchae*' in *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange*, pp.235-244, p.236.

For a further clarification of Pentheus's presence in the tragedy which does not bare his name but which does carry the totally ritualistic possession the god enforces on the city, let it be added that Pentheus is enmeshed in a series of ambiguities, of the title, of the women's amphibolous role, and of a god as elusive and complex as only Dionysus can be – absent under the presence of his mask, present in all the absence of a mask[571]: he is the Bromius, Evius, Bacchus of the chorus of Bacchae, 'a certain Dionysus'(220) and 'one of these charlatan magicians'(234) according to Pentheus, 'the son of Semele' whose wine makes 'mankind forget its grief'(280) for Tiresias, and the god 'incognito disguised as man'(5) who 'assumes whatever form he wished'(477) according to Dionysus. This time, wishing to be disguised as man, the god comes to Thebes, and, with all the power of his divinely elusive presence, in all the negative feelings[572] he expresses, he indirectly pronounces Pentheus's doing, his own solely rather than Dionysus's doing, because only 'if the men of Thebes attempt to force my Bacchae from the mountainside by threat of arms, I shall marshal my Maenads and take the field'(51-3), as he declares. Pentheus's *ergon* to save the city – his intention, acting, outcome – against the god's will does not seem to be unconditional[573], but the god's threat rests upon Pentheus's – the leader of the Thebans – decision, or ignorance, or vulnerability[574].

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[571] Jean-Pierre Vernant, 'The Masked Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae*', in *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*,pp.381-412 (p.383). The writer, in his most inspiring study, makes a distinction between the two Dionysus, the one of the 'official cult', and the other of the 'tragic representation', and analyses the image of them since, as he writes, the play makes a distinction between the two, but also 'expresses the interplay between the two'. Here, because the analysis concentrates on the performance of Pentheus, comments on this double identity of the god are not part of the analysis because, in a way, it is taken for granted since Dionysus is one of the most innovating gods of Greece, as has been written in previous chapters.

[572] Dionysus, besides coming to establish his religion, comes to take revenge because his mother's sisters say that he is not the son of Zeus, and that his mother 'had slept beside a man in love and fathered off her shame on Zeus – a fraud, they sneered, contrived by Cadmus to protect his daughter's name(25-31).

[573] As Taplin writes 'while it is certain that Dionysus will be accepted at Thebes in the end, the strength and manner of the opposition remains unknown, and much of the suspense of the next 750 lines derives from it'(*Greek Tragedy in Action*,p.56).

[574] E. R. Dodds in 'Introduction to the *Bacchae*' in *Euripides V*, pp. 142-153 (p.146).

Outlining Pentheus's performing self now, apart from the god's legitimate, ritualistic prerogative to change faces, masks, or forms, Pentheus's appearance of performing self is characterised by the mask[575] he wears during the most intense scene of the play in order to 'see forbidden sights'(913) – drawn by his curiosity and the god's guidance – the one he dies in unrecognized by his own mother, and the very same that Dionysus wears when he comes back to Thebes(2). Pentheus's mask does not hide an imitator of a god/player or a god/demon, but it defines the limits of his human dimension, and it exposes a young, 'reckless fool'(358) who cannot do what Cadmus, his grandfather, advises him to do: 'Even if this Dionysus is no god, as you assert, persuade yourself that he is. The fiction is a noble one'(333-35) – referring thus to the necessity of the city politics to endorse the anarchy of the intruder Dionysus in order to subdue it for the city's well being. Pentheus does not persuade himself that Dionysus is a god, does not persuade himself to accept a 'fiction' related to a god the others accept, but, nevertheless, he becomes exactly who and what the god appears to be and appears to do – he becomes the personification of the god's doctrine of anarchy, that of the reversal of roles. What he refuses to accept in a god, he accepts for himself: his own self under a mask, a fictitious not-to-be self of absence – by wearing a wig and a woman's dress in order to 'see the sight'(812) of the maenads – that makes his mask more real and macabre than any of his decisions, or any of his authoritarian claims that the stranger who infects the women 'shall die as he deserves – by being stoned to death'(355-57): Pentheus dies wearing his mask – 'by being stoned to death'.

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[575] As has already been written, Vernant's study is titled 'The Masked Dionysus'. and as also said, the reading of his study was extremely important for the writing of this analysis. 'The Masked Dionysus' is the ambiguous, complex, ever-present god of *Bacchae*, but his presence is related to a man's 'war' against him, as he says (637), and this analysis concentrates on the man's performance.

Pentheus's performing self's[576] existence, short and yet complete (Rosenmeyer, p. 383), beheaded[577] and yet fully acted out, is denoted by a mask, his, but also Dionysus's, as if the two cousins are 'indistinguishable' (Vernant, p. 382) but only at times and only under the god's guidance, as if their masks explore each other's boundaries of each other's performances, and, also, as if they both investigate appearances turned into realities[578], all under the god's perception of communication with mortals.

Exploring Pentheus's double-masked performance on stage which clarifies his further association with the city – of the actor in the role of Pentheus, and of Pentheus's in the role of a Bacchant – the first thing examined will be Pentheus's *ergon* against the Other/god and the Other/foreigner, as he says, which turns out to be an *ergon* against himself because he fails to understand that what he perceives as seeing and knowing is actually his ignorance, and what he perceives as an experience of his not-seen self is actually a tragic experience of his seen self.

Pentheus, therefore, acts against the Other who turns out to be himself, thinks he is in control of his action, but – just as the other performing characters examined so far – he is not. His city, confronting, ambiguous self claims his social dimensions until the very end, but deals with a god right there, on stage, *the* actual god of stage, and therefore, no matter how intense his performance is, no matter how tragic his mask proves to be, it is a mask of a Bacchant who – because of Dionysus's apocalyptic and multi-levelled presence – cannot overwhelm the stage the way the other characters manage to do. Yet, as Dionysus says, although he is 'a man, and nothing more, he

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[576] Dodds ('Introduction to *The Bacchae*', p.147) points out the fact that Pentheus is not a tragic character in the way other characters are, such as Ajax or Oedipus, with their own grand presence on stage. Since 'performing self' does not mean 'tragic character', therefore, the above statement does not affect the argument that Pentheus is a performing self.

[577] Pentheus is beheaded by his mother.

[578] A. David Napier, *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox*(London: University of California Press, 1986), p. xxiii.

presumed to wage a war with god'(636-37), and thus, his presence is certainly that of a performing self – not of a performing god – and as such, he can be identified with only one performance on stage – complete yet short, beheaded but fully acted – of one tragedy – his within his city, a complete and fully acted tragedy.

Pentheus's association with Thebes unfolds only after the city scene establishes itself in front of the palace, through the presence of Dionysus, the chorus of Asian Bacchae, Tiresias, and Cadmus. Thebes is mentioned by all, before claimed by Pentheus, and even then, it does not stay his for long – at least not during his life time. His first words on stage 'I happened to be away, out of the city, but reports reached me of some strange mischief here'(215-16) demonstrate his absence and ignorance, but also the others' relation, presence and 'mischief' in the city which affect his coming and doing in it. As such, Dionysus 'comes back' to where he was born(2) to teach a lesson to the city(39)[579], 'first in Hellas'(20). For the chorus, Thebes, 'the nurse of Semele', should crown her 'hair with ivy' and 'come dance the dance of god'(105-111). And for Tiresias and Cadmus, 'the heirs of customs and traditions hallowed by age'(201-2), Thebes is 'our Thebes'(172) where all 'should dance'(207) in god's honour.

To this setting, submerged under Dionysian echoes, Pentheus comes, swaggering his youth and appreciation of the 'merrymaking here in Thebes'(358). His perception

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[579] Dionysus's returning home – *iko* – seems to have more than one basis: Thebes is the place where he was born, and where his mother's shrine is (11), but he also comes to 'refute that slander spoken by my mother's sisters' who 'said that Dionysus was no son of Zeus'(26-28); for that reason, he drove his mother's sisters and all the women of Thebes up to the mountains, [...] where they wander, crazed of mind'(33-36); and he continues, 'this city must learn its lesson: it lacks initiation in my mysteries'(39-40). He speaks not only against his mother's sisters, but against Pentheus as well, who 'revolts against divinity, in *me* [...] Therefore I shall prove to him and every man in Thebes that I am god'(45-48).He finishes by revealing his long-term plans to leave Thebes once his 'worship is established [...], and then he will 'be 'revealed to other men in other lands'(49-50). So it seems that Dionysus comes back, not only to see his mother's shrine, not only to take revenge, but also to establish his religion before going to other cities.

of the city – not theirs – is of it in 'obscene disorder'(231), full of 'filthy mysteries'(260), or 'unruliness'(248), where even his own mother, along with other women, behaves like an animal(228), as he says detaching thus himself from the demand of the city to follow the god's orders. The city Pentheus knows – of the women staying at home not drinking wine(261) – seems to have faded away disappearing under the madness(344) that 'certain Dionysus, whoever he may be'(220) brought from Lydia along with his 'long yellow curls smelling of perfumes, with flushed cheeks and the spells of Aphrodite in his eyes'(235-37). Pentheus is before a new undefined[580] danger, a confusing force he faces unprepared and unsuspecting[581] for the first time. His position in the city means for his unwise self that he is obliged to do something against this irrational, other energy around him, even if that something he must do cannot stop 'this'(242), even if the threat is not an ordinary one.

But Pentheus can only see a city he cannot recognise, a Thebes he means to turn into the ordinary place it was before his leaving – by defending it with his ordinary means: capturing and killing the responsible ones. And *this* is his *ergon* in the city: threatened by what he does not understand because he cannot see[582] it, he does what he understands and sees: he locks the women in(227), threatens to send to prison Cadmus and Tiresias, and orders his attendants to destroy Dionysus's place:

> Throw his fillets out to the wind and weather.
> That will provoke him more than anything.

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[580] Hans Diller, 'Euripides' Final Phase: The *Bacchae*' in *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*, pp.357-369 (p.362).

[581] B. J. J. M. Bongers, 'Euripides *Bacchae* 1064-9: Dionysus, the Wheel and the Lathe' , *Mnemosyne*, LV(2002), 83-86(p.83).

[582] According to Vernant ('The Masked Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae*', p. 394) no other text so 'intensely repeats words signifying seeing'. For him the 'seeing' is related mainly with Dionysus whose primary purpose is to be seen, and recognized by all. Additionally, though, the text repeats 'seeing' and 'sight' in relation to Pentheus as well, perhaps ironically so as it turns to be at the end with his admitted curiosity to see the sight of the maenads – which curiosity is his damnation.

As for the rest of you, go and scour the city.

for that effeminate stranger, […]

And when you take him, clap him in chains

and march him here.(350-56)

His acting against an enemy whose performance he fails to recognise leaves him not only fighting against a god, not only unwilling to surrender to the women's desires, but primarily a solitary advocate of one man's opinion, his own. And *that* is also his *ergon*: a solitary *agon*, a solitary reaction against his people's reaction to the god, and against the old men's advice to him.

While for Pentheus his social role, as the head citizen, is to chase the god and his followers, for Tiresias – in a role as a mediator between Pentheus and Dionysus, but also as a politician considering the city's fragile existence between various undetermined forces – power is not 'what matters in the life of man'(310-11) and it should not be mistaken for wisdom(312): a good citizen, Tiresias says – in perfect agreement with the words heard in the Athenian city – is the one who is not 'glib'(268), because 'the man whose glibness flows from his conceit of speech declares the thing he is: a worthless and a stupid citizen'(269-71); and Tiresias continues that Pentheus should welcome(313) the god because wine is one of the two[583]supreme blessings[584]. Additionally, Pentheus should not worry that the women are not 'chaste'[585] when they become Dionysus's followers: 'it is her character and nature that keeps a woman chaste'(316-17). And lastly, the prophet advices Pentheus

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[583] The other is Demeter's grain.

[584] Tiresias's comments on wine are as follows: 'suffering mankind forgets its grief; from it comes sleep; with it oblivion of the troubles of the day. And when we pour libations to the gods, we pour the god of wine himself that through his interaction man may win the favour of heaven'(280-85).

[585] According to Dodds ('Introduction to *The Bacchae*'p. 144) Euripides' Bacchae warn the spectators that what they see is not necessarily connected with what they perceive in relation to the maenads' mountain orgies. An indication of that, according to Dodds, is the fact that Euripides insists on the fact that the Bacchae of this drama are chaste.

to glorify the god: 'the god delights in glory'(321) the way Pentheus is 'pleased when men stand outside [...] and the city glorifies the name of Pentheus'(319-20).

Tiresias's dramatic plea – endorsed by Cadmus – covers items not related wholly to the Dionysian worship in the city, but with the wisdom of governing versus the power of governing. For Pentheus, the *ergon* of ruling means protecting the city's status with troops, prisons, and chains in the name of the city's stability and the safety of his rule; for Tiresias, the *ergon* of the protection of the well-being of the city and of Pentheus's house depends on a citizen's, or a head citizen's, recognition of the necessities[586] of the city, even the necessity of the 'merrymaking' Pentheus condemns, of what a city wants and needs at a particular time – the wisdom and flexibility Pentheus lacks, the same expressed epigrammatically by his grandfather: 'Even if this Dionysus is no god, [...], persuade yourself that he is'(333-34).

Pitifully enough, Pentheus is not Cadmus, not even Cadmus's daughter for that matter. Pentheus takes his position for granted, and he considers himself able to decide about the city based on his origin and his position – endorsing thus family laws rather than city laws – not because of his seeing himself in harmonious unity with the citizens' decisions. He does not have the wisdom to persuade himself of the necessities of the city, and the *ergon* of his pathetically confident 'I' continues the action he has adopted since he returned to the city: 'I'll have his head off'(241) and 'I'll make him pay'(345) are heard in an almost antagonistic fashion against the words of wisdom spoken before, and his response to the prophet that the man who taught all this 'folly'(345) will be punished sound like a blasphemous epilogue to the city's command.

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[586] 'in the Greek, ' wisdom' implies a firm awareness of [...] one's place in the scheme of things. [...], it presupposes self-knowledge, an acceptance of those necessities that compose the limits of human fate'(Dodds , p.145).

In a way, Pentheus can be seen as a kind of an Athenian Alcibiades[587] who takes his family's aristocratic position, his charm and arrogance for granted, and despite voices of wisdom, such as that of Nicias's who objected to Alcibiades's ambitious plan to drag the Athenians into the disastrous expedition to Sicily, entraps the city in an adventure relying too much on his being secure in his own wisdom. Unlike Oedipus's wisdom to rely on the city's respected voices and the facts he only takes for granted, Pentheus displays his own *ergon* detached completely from the city's reality. And *this* detachment is a blasphemy against the ideas of unity, communication, and reciprocity embodied in the idea of the city's being.

That Pentheus cannot have Dionysus's head off is almost too obvious to be mentioned. That his *ergon* is simply a parenthetical note of action when compared with Dionysus's *ergon* needs to be mentioned only as an introductory statement to the god's fully developed Other force, the one that Pentheus's *ergon* has meant to subdue from the time he first heard of it.

When the chained god is dragged before Pentheus by the soldiers[588], the two cousins exchange statements as if they are in a contest of shooting words at each other, attacking each other, confronting each other, and measuring each other. Both are each other's Other, and yet the god's Other appearing before Pentheus is a synthesis of many Others facing Pentheus's monolithic city Other: Dionysus is

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[587] According to Rehms, (*The Play of Space*) the year of the tragedy is 407, and it is the year, 'the Athenians welcomed Alcibiades back to their city, rescinding his exile [...], and ordering the Eleusinian authorities to lift the curses pronounced against him' during a temporary euphoria of theirs thinking that the war with Spartans had ended since Alcibiades, with the help of Persians, will accomplish it (p. 213).

[588] Dionysus lets the soldiers capture him, but, at the same time, the chains on the women's legs that are captured along with him 'snapped apart' and the doors of the prisons 'swung wide'(347,349) as the soldiers report.

femininely[589] attractive, sharply cooperative, mysteriously absent at times, and above all, eccentrically enigmatic.

Are Dionysus's shapes of the Other the city's necessities that Tiresias meant? Or the 'fiction' Cadmus mentioned? Indeed they are, and in 'whatever form he wished'(477) – forms as choices of his own, of a god's anthropomorphic spirit in his effort to exist in the city as a trick, a game, a necessity of disorder, forms not as those of Pentheus who sees him only as an enemy. And while Pentheus ridicules the god's appearance[590], Dionysus plays with him. He sounds cooperative and flexible – according to Pentheus's need for answers – responding to questions about his origins as a foreigner, and the origins of the god he worships – as if they are two different faces. He is mysterious and provocative when he does not reveal the god's mysteries: 'I am forbidden to say'(473), 'our mysteries abhor an unbelieving man'(475). He is defensive of his religion when Pentheus accuses him of holding the rites at night so that women are seduced: 'you can find debauchery by daylight too'(487) is his answer. He also declares his unseen presence taken as absence by the uninitiated Pentheus: 'He is here now'(499) [...], 'with me. Your blasphemies have made you blind'(501). Finally he is enigmatic when Pentheus shouts at him 'you shall regret these clever answers'(480), and his clever answer 'And you, your stupid

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[589] On Dionysus's femininity , Rosenmeyer ('Tragedy and Religion: The *Bacchae*', p.374) comments that he is both 'woman-in-man, or man-in-woman, the unlimited personality'. And in an extensive commentary on Euripides's, along with the other tragedians', presentation of the dichotomy between men and women on stage, J. March ('Euripides the Misogynist?', p.64-65) thinks that 'this clear-cut dichotomy of male/female, active/passive, etc., is a modern concept' rather than a view shared by Greeks. She writes of examples from tragedies and the *Iliad* which show that passivity does not always go with women, and that Euripides does not see 'the human race as being divided into two separated halves'. In the case of Dionysus's femininity in *Bacchae*, this is certainly true. March's comments support, besides the god's appearance in *Bacchae*, the elements of ambiguity associated with the whole concept of the performing self.

[590] Pentheus's words are ironic of the god's appearance: 'Your curls are long. You do not wrestle, I take it. And what fair skin you have – you must take care of it – no daylight complexion; no, it comes from the night when you hunt Aphrodite with your beauty'(455-58).

blasphemies'(481) makes Pentheus shout back 'What a bold bacchant! You wrestle well – when it comes to words'(490).

They both wrestle well against each Other's Other – with words/mirrors of their performing selves in a game of exchanging questions, insults, threats, gazes, even masks later. But is it a game for both? Behind the masks of words, behind the appearance of the chained, feminine god, the game is not what it looks; it is only his, with Pentheus acting as if it is his very own, as if he is in control of what he perceives as the Other; and behaving as if he is fully in control, he thinks he decides about Dionysus's fate when locking him in the stables. According to the god's rules of the game, however, Pentheus is the one locked in his decisions because what he does, is who he is: 'You do not know the limits of your strength. You do not know what you do. You do not know who you are'(505-7); to which comes Pentheus's proud answer: 'I am Pentheus, the son of Echion and Agave.'(507) – implying that the pride he displays is the one he deserves as a king, not like the one Oedipus's deserves as a leader of the people open to the people's opinions.

Already however, as if all along it was simply a matter of time, Pentheus's proud self is not simply a matter of birth and of being, but a matter of acting against a god: he is the hunter, the rival, the blasphemous Other who, with what he appears to be doing – persecuting Dionysus – he is also who he is, a persecutor; and through his hunting for the god, he becomes the hunted by the god, under god's complete control and total possession.

Therefore, Pentheus, after trying to confront the polymorphous Other as he thinks he should, enters the last phase of his *ergon* during which he experiences the ambiguities, and the reversal of his roles, as a result of his decisions and ignorance.

When the god, ambiguous, elusive, eccentric master[591] of the Theban territory, offers to 'lead the women back to Thebes without bloodshed'(803), and offers to 'save' Pentheus by his – Dionysus's – 'own devices'(805), Pentheus accepts, and welcomes the god's suggestion 'to see that sight'(812) of the Theban women on the mountains, since 'see' for Pentheus is equal to 'know', and, by all means, his 'royal eyes'(747) want to see the facts so that he will know them.

But Pentheus, in complete detachment from city and cultural necessities/laws, despite his certainty that he acts for his city, does not know that in the god's mask of words 'save' means 'possess', and persuaded by the god, during his second confrontation with him, the young king becomes a bacchant toy in the god's hand, and changes his appearance during one of the most macabre scenes of Greek tragedy, according to Taplin[592], in which Pentheus's reversal of roles is apocalyptic: the sight of the bacchant women he wants to see becomes the sight himself – by setting a wig, by wearing a dress, and by holding a thyrsus. His sight is pitifully grotesque not because he is not ridiculed by having his hands tight with chains, by having troops chasing him, and by being thrown into prison; but because the god himself fixes the details of Pentheus's appearance, and anxiously cares for his outlook. The god touches him possessing him in his effort to prepare him for his last communion with the living sight of the bacchant women and his mother, and to arrange the last details of his body appearance on stage before Pentheus's violent end and the *sparagmos* (Rehm, p. 203) of the final act of the king's ritual occurs :

DIONYSUS: But look: one of your curls has come loose from under the snood where I tucked it.

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[591] In an almost perfect moment of epiphany, Dionysus shakes the whole stage, burns the palace, and then, drives the women of Thebes to the mountain of Cithairon where, in a state of ecstasy, they act wildly, keeping company with beasts, and destroying the villagers' land.

[592] *Greek Tragedy in Action*, p.76.

PENTHEUS: It must have worked loose

when I was dancing for joy and shaking my head.

DIONYSUS: Then let me be your maid and tuck it back.

Hold still.

[…]

DIONYSUS: And now your strap has slipped. Yes,

and your robe hangs askew at the ankles.(927-36)

The costume ceremony is over, and the reversal of roles is complete since, on the one hand, the political, military leader worries about his curls; or the confident ruler asks Dionysus to arrange his snood; or the masculine youth wears a strap; or the loud-voiced hunter of Bacchae 'shall take deserted streets'(840) so that he will 'pass through the city without being seen'(839) wearing a dress. And on the other hand, Dionysus, in his role as the manipulator of the scene, prepares every single detail of Pentheus's appearance: his victim – or actually, the coming sacrifice of it – that it should be faultless to its last minute feature (ibid.). After all, Pentheus himself asked to go through this experience – not to its very end, of course: *that* is beyond his reach and sight.

For now, Pentheus sees his own image, right there, on stage, next to Dionysus, next to the 'two suns blazing in the heavens. And now two Thebes, two cities, and each with seven gates. […]. Have you always been a beast?'(918-22), his drunk[593] self asks Dionysus, and the god's answer 'you see what you could not when you were blind'(924) not only initiates Pentheus's complete possession by the god, but the king's visual personification of the *ergon* he refused to perform before – the one it is

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[593] To Pentheus's condition as a drunk man, Vernant ('The Masked Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae*' p.395) adds a new reality for Pentheus: that now he sees as a man of 'double vision […] torn between two different ways of seeing, the old which is rather disturbed, and the new which is still beyond his reach.

too late to do for his own benefit now: the Pentheus standing face to face with the god wears the mask[594] of the god of 'all those forms he assumes' ever since he arrived at a city, the *ergon* Cadmus and Tiresias were trying to convert Pentheus to, the force out of the ordinary Pentheus was chasing, the irrational energy in Thebes he was trying to capture, the merrymaking of wine, the fiction he should have persuaded himself to accept, and the feminine appearance/mask of Dionysus he had faced during their first confrontation. Pentheus's wearing of the mask seems to personify all 'those forms the god assumes', all the unity of the forms the mask implies.

Indeed, Pentheus's mask is the mask of the Other he was after, and his appearance seems parallel to the Other he was persecuting. Yet, although he wears the mask of the god, he does not become the projection of the god/Other – as he would have if he was a true bacchant – but he becomes only a projection of himself as Other, a projection of himself wearing the mask of his *hunted* Other – the god whose head he wanted to cut off, the one doomed by Pentheus, the persecutor. Thus, although he wears the mask of the god, it is *he*, Pentheus, who wears the mask, who shapes what is on him, in this case, the mask; and although he appears to be the personification of the god's *ergon*, nevertheless, the mask of the god he wears is the mask, the shape *he* gave to the Dionysus under the mask, the one *he was perceiving* as his Other – the god of 'obscene disorder', of unruliness', of 'filthy mysteries', of women's 'mock ecstasies' – his god/Other 'worthy of hanging'. And therefore, under the mask he wears, the gaze of the Other city god sees only Pentheus's *ergon* – his mockery, threats, insults to the god – sees Pentheus's gaze or perception of the god's *ergon*, and not just the god 'of all those forms' Pentheus would have 'assumed' if he was not perceiving Dionysus as his enemy, but as the way the others in the city did. As such,

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[594] By 'mask' is meant the whole changing of his appearance.

just as Dionysus was assumed to be doomed by Pentheus, Pentheus himself will be miserably assumed to be doomed by his Other who happens to be a God worshiped by Pentheus's city. His mask does not unite him with the other bacchants, but it dislocates him, and it stands like an emblem of his own division to come, his total dislocation from the others.

Wearing his ambiguous, fraudulent, grotesque mask of the performance of his very own performance, Pentheus thinks he will 'see the sight', but, as already said, what he did previously makes *him* a sight, first of the god, then of the maenads, and eventually of his own mother who 'like a priestess with her victim'(1114) falls 'upon him', and sacrifices him to the god she is possessed by as 'the prize'(1175) of her successful hunting. In vain, Pentheus shouts to her : 'Mother! I have done a wrong, but do not kill your own son for my offense'(1120-21), distinguishing, in this way, his identity as a son from that of him as a fake bacchant, and admitting his mistake for persecuting the god, too.

Agave, however, does not and cannot make the distinction between her family ties and her religious ties, or her son's for that matter, especially when it comes to Dionysus[595] who is above family/blood ties, and who, as a god, pronounces Pentheus 'a man, a man, and nothing more […] '(636-37) – not a son's mother who can be saved by his mother – and through Agave, or to punish Agave as well[596], he exterminates Pentheus. His head, along with his dismembered body (1125-1143) are carried back home as the god promises to him, 'cradled in your [sic] mother's arms'(968-69), while the royal family, Cadmus and his daughters have to deal with separation and exile.(1363, 1366, 1370, 1382)

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[595] As is mentioned, Dionysus, in his role as an Athenian city god, is responsible for driving women away from their family obligations.

[596] As already written, Dionysus's mother's sisters 'said that Dionysus was no son of Zeus, but Semele had slept beside a man in love and fathered off her shame on Zeus'(28-30).

As such, through the royal family – the head and symbol of the city – Thebes is punished by Dionysus since what is left from the city, or what will come next will be a different Thebes. Pentheus's dismembered body symbolises his failure to unify himself with the city, and to work the way Oedipus saved the city: he cured it by being the source of cure – its *pharmacon* (Rehm, p.212); but Pentheus works as poison – the other meaning of *pharmacon*.

The Bacchae ends neither with Pentheus's last words as reported by the messenger, nor with his mother carrying her son's body to Thebes, but with Dionysus who declares that he disengages the city from his possession, and with the chorus, who rather ambiguously finalises Pentheus's tragedy:

> The gods have many shapes.
>
> […]
>
> And what was most expected
>
> has not been accomplished.
>
> But god has found his way
>
> for what no man expected.(1387-99)

What 'was expected' and 'has not been accomplished'? Does the compassionate[597] chorus refer to Agave's horrifying experience – the thing not 'expected'? Or to Pentheus's 'most expected and not accomplished' experience as a bacchant-to-be? Or does the chorus raise meteor-like dilemmas received as such by the spectators about their own expectations of the performing play realised visually and verbally on stage?

Answers to these questions might be as ambivalent as the ones dealing with the tragedy's title have been. The ambiguity of the final lines can invite nothing other than an inexhaustible number of interpretations, because, as so accurately has been

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[597] The chorus, even though they are Dionysus's followers, at the end, express their sympathy to Agave and her fate: they call her 'poor woman'(1200), and they 'pity'(1328) Cadmus whose grandson's death 'bears hard' on him.

inferred, the text of *The Bacchae* 'constantly recedes before one's grasp, advancing, not retreating, steadily into deeper chaos and larger order, coming finally to rest only god knows where – where is to say, where it matters'[598]. Of the many areas for reaching possible points of 'rest', here the discussion concentrates on the *agon* between Dionysus and Pentheus – this chaotic, appalling, 'coming-finally-to-rest-only-god-knows-where' *agon* between a human being and a god, and to their see-me-see-you relation in which the presence of the human being affirms the presence of the god, and the gaze of the one affirms the gaze of the other one; or the distortion/punishment of the one by the Other affirms the distortion/negligence of the Other by the one. To put it differently, the performance of the one shapes, affirms the performance of the Other, since the Other performs only through the gaze of the one who – nevertheless – plays according to the Other's manner of playing, as Pentheus performs in the play.

The ultimate paradox? The ultimate relation? Yes, the ultimate Euripidean perception of the god whose presence in the city assumes many forms, and where the individual affirms the god's many forms, and the individual's many necessities in a relation of dependence between them, encircled as they both are by the necessity of their city. Both Dionysus and Pentheus delineate the relation between divine forces and human limits, but also, their tragedy, *The Bacchae*, and their tragedian, Euripides, go beyond the relation between the two, to the relation of the individual with his/her self, the one Pentheus creates the moment he neglects the opinion of the others in the city, and therefore, neglects to see himself through the gaze of the others.

It is this Other self he exposes with the mask of detachment he wears on top of, or instead of his mask as Pentheus, and he becomes visually and verbally, his Other,

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[598] Dodds, 'Introduction to *The Bacchae*', p.142.

alienated self, the enemy of god and people, the Pentheus who barely realises that a war against a god reads as a war against a city, and concludes as a war against one's self.

To epitomise the analysis of Pentheus's self, thus, a young king decides to act against the Other that everyone advises him not to; but Pentheus seems to declare his ignorance by asserting his knowledge as to the insignificance of the Other – Dionysus in person. When he is finally aware of the God's significance, it is far too late for him to declare his original false perception of Dionysus.

Right there, therefore, on the Dionysian stage, Euripides simulates the idea of the character's performance and double performance, toys with the idea of Dionysus performing on his home stage, and plays with Pentheus's mask, just as Dionysus plays with Pentheus during the entire scene and setting of *The Bacchae.*

For Euripides, one might say, as the analysis of *Medea, Hippolytus,* and *The Bacchae* has demonstrated, the characters' perception of the state and the state's religion is problematic – certainly more problematic than the one displayed by the Sophoclean characters. The relationship between the individual and the state/religion, and as such, the characters' awareness of one's subjectivity – although it is taken for granted that it results from the self's awareness of the community – underlines 'a critical, combative relationship with the city rather than an organic one'(Taxidou, p. 12).

Euripides' characters, created during the Peloponnesian war, and during the years of Euripides' exile in Macedonia, not only raise dilemmas about the challenges of human existence in the city, but challenge the idea of city itself – its practices, laws, necessities, and rituals. The characters perform as if they clamour for a *topos*/enemy

rather than a *topos*/cure which does not save them or their city. As such, the link between the individual and the city is taken as being broken.

The Bacchae, one of the most characteristic plays for the study of Athenian performance and the performing self, with its grievous *agon* between Dionysus and Pentheus, and with the *ergon* of both on stage, has to be the final tragedy for drawing conclusions about the connection between society and tragedy in the fifth-century BC city of Athens.

Conclusion

Looking back at the distinctive elements of Athenian culture, one can hardly miss the Athenians' awareness of time, since – obsessed as they seemed to be with their city – they were so sharply determined to mould and seal their city image, and their own within it, on pieces of marble, in texts, and on stage. It is an awareness which turns into a kind of empathy with the whole concept of display – verbal and visual. Their culture, diversified, multi-dimensional, and multi-levelled, covering a whole spectrum of expressions, can be read as 'passions which yet survive stamped on these lifeless things'[599].

However, is it read only as 'passions [...] stamped on these lifeless things'? Quite probably it would have been, *if* it were not for that particular expression of their culture which was moulded and actualised on living images, read and passed on as dramatic characters on the stage of their theatrical performances.

Ever since that presence of them on stage, human passions and stories have been sealed on these figures who perform in front of other human beings, demanding to communicate every time they act on stage. And it is exactly this display of human conditions – this public, direct, living, human *ergon* – exhibiting, revealing, almost offering and submitting itself to any physical, mental, emotional response, criticism, and self-criticism which equips the dramatic characters with their particular characteristics.

Reaching the end of the argument on the connections between the culture of Athens, as lived and perceived by Athenians, with performing concepts moulding characters

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[599] Percy, Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias' in *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, p.574.

on stage, the following conclusions have been achieved. First, the performance culture provides regular, recurring principles and categories identified as such, transformed variably, and sealed in staged characters. Second, the unifying factor between society and theatre is a model of a self who becomes conscious of one's self by performing either in society, or on stage through acting the roles and the concepts associated with the Athenian culture. Third, the comparison between Sophocles' and Euripides' characters reveals that the two tragedians, as performing selves themselves, project their interpretation of the culture, and demonstrate as such the whole diversity of the individual's involvement with a ritualistic and complex culture – ranging from an integral, organic relationship between the individual and the city, to a total fatalistic relationship between the two.

The above conclusions make conceivable the aim of this research – that the model of the Athenian self, as inferred from the analysis of culture and of the dramatic characters, utilises a model self connected with a particular culture and actualised on that culture's stage, yet, at the same time, might be actualised on other stages of diversified epochs due to the elements of human agency, as the analysis has demonstrated, the model self actualises on stage. In that sense, although one of the aims of this research, with the employment of its anthropological/cultural approach, was to apprehend a social world – the Athenian – in a possibly fresh manner, the double focus of the conclusion underlines the links between societies and theatrical characters arising out of any society under investigation, but also, among societies themselves – since, as Turner has written, although 'we humans may divide ourselves between us and them, […], we and they share substance, and […] mirror each other' ('The Anthropology of Performance' p. 8), and therefore, 'we humans' learn about 'us

humans' when dramatic characters, of Greek or other origin actualise on stage human passions, ideas, and experiences.

Finally, the Athenian self of the Dionysian stage, performing and performed as he or she is, is not only be the connecting factor between society and theatre, but also the Other unifying factor between the Other individual and the Other text of another culture – the third Other, the text with the living voice – anthropology seeks in order to understand individuals and cultures.

As a last glance dedicated to a society which initiated this culturally oriented research, let it be said that the theatrical plays known as Athenian tragedies seem to epitomise far too naturally and spontaneously the performance culture of displaying a visual and verbal public *ergon* – not on papyrus or on stone – but an *ergon* with all the complexities such an *ergon* implies since it corresponds to living beings acting in front of others who react to their acting. And perhaps, even if some voices may insist that reading a tragedy is open to more interpretations than seeing a tragedy[600], the text is written for the city and for the Athenians to celebrate their role as spectators/judges, not just as listeners or readers of poems, or Homeric lines recited at courts or at Pnyx.

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[600] Simon Goldhill, in his 1986 book *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), as the title identifies, centres his attention on the 'city of words' – the title of a chapter – and the reading of tragedy rather than the examination of it as a visual action. It is true that the emphasis in the book is on the social and historical city environment, which is the tragedy's environment, but certain questions Goldhill asks at the end of his book suggest that he is probably on the reader's side rather than the spectator's. He poses, for example, the following: 'Is not a performance necessarily only a selection from among the plural potentialities of a text?'(p. 282). The answers to the above challenging questions are extracted from David Wiles' article 'Reading Greek Performance (*Greece and Rome* 34 (1987), pp. 136-51)): Wiles, responding to Goldhill's views, admits at first that the reader can certainly benefit from a second reading of the play, but the spectators are the ones who are not restricted to words only; they 'open up'(p.141) to a framework of visual images as well which enrich the meaning of the words. And, he continues, a performance is certainly and primarily a text, but the reader of a text can only read the text, while the listener to it can only listen to the text; the spectator, though, is inclined to read, listen, and see the text simultaneously. Wiles concludes that 'the written text of a play is in the last analysis a means of encoding a set of actions. To examine the code in isolation from the action encoded is a critical analysis that needs justification'(pp. 146,149). Wiles, in his answer, therefore, does not exclude the Athenian spectators from the action. They see forms of the theatrical performance on stage and listen to the content of the text, too, so, the spectators sense the action and the probabilities of the actions taking place in front of them. By all means, as Wiles argues, 'visual images have limited meaning until words guide the spectator in how to "read" the verbal images'(p.149), and therefore, as is argued all along here, a combination of both, the spectacle, and the text are what the Athenians associate with tragedy.

The Athenians consciously are spectators when they come to the theatre, open to any visual and verbal images and probabilities, even if one performance is 'necessarily only a selection from among the plural potentialities of the text'. But the *ergon*, the performance on stage, any time it is on stage, as part of its culture, is open to various potentialities both verbal and visual, is open to contradictions and ambiguities the Athenians are never tired of experimenting with, are never tired of dealing with.

The characters' appearance on stage, beyond being just the cause of their success, is the effect of a long process of concepts, both Greek and Athenian, such as the concept of competition, that of Otherness, the city political arguments, or the whole idea of performing a series of religious duties, implanted in the culture of the dramatic characters – in its origins, ritualistic politics, religious festivals, and city society – exploding as in a kind of violent public birth, and exposing the characters' coming into a theatrical existence far too intense, expressive, imaginative, and human to be dismissed or ignored, far too innovative not to ask to be understood.

The variety of the above concepts which interpret the society and the culture, and the synthesis of the two in the creation of dramatic characters, impel themselves toward a multi-level cultural comparative research based on a fusion of several analytical approaches – otherwise the research, and this study can only be partially complete.

How, for example, can the characters be studied and interpreted without taking into consideration all cultural synthetic concepts transformed, expressed, and performed as such?

Can the characters be ignored? How can Ajax be ignored, the Homeric warrior, next to a versatile Odysseus whose convincing arguments are as political and Athenian as they can be, and who reminds others of their duties to their old warriors

in the name of city solidarity? Or, how can Electra's attachment to the *oikos* be dismissed when it reminds the spectators of the strong contrast between family and state laws, between archaic past and city present? And then, it is Medea's agonistic and competitive spirit as if she is in a game of sovereignty opposed to political state powers, in a game of tragic consequences for her, even if she is the winner of the fight she initiates – but what a winner! A female winner who by definition is not a state winner. Oedipus, on the other hand, plays himself and the Other, and discovers a new face of an old Self – or is it the other way around? And who is the Other? His enemy or Thebes's – his city's – enemy? As for Hippolytus and Pentheus, two immature players/performers, in a small way, toys in the hands of natural or divine powers, they challenge the others, but, they are, certainly, challenged and eventually defeated by the others or themselves, either being too pure to survive in a society of false values, or too ignorant to recognise a god in disguise.

How can any spectator dismiss what the human performers perform on the stage of the Dionysian theatre, and how can the Athenians' culture and theatre be understood without taking into consideration the implications associated with the characters' performance?

Theirs are the plays which mark myths, wars, and adventures, or trace cycles of histories and cultures in Homeric seas of human odysseys and Sisyphean journeys. And they are the characters who with the voice of Oedipus declare responsibility for their choices; with the voice of Medea confirm the emotionally devastating consequences of their actions; with the voice of Hippolytus forgive those who condemn them; with the voice of Orestes doubt the choices of gods; with the voice of Ajax accept the darkness of their loneliness amid all the friends they thought they had; and through the echo of Dionysus's voice and comments when speaking about

Pentheus's insignificance as a man, they act out their insignificance as if they worship with their performance not so much their insignificance or their ignorance, but this other dimension, the Dionysian one they are able to actualise on stage: the dimension which comes out of the knowledge that they are able – at least – to feel momentarily in control, and to play with the idea of being in control of their play – in their city, next to the others and because of the others' presence, where they are able to perform the others and themselves as others.

And they, spectators and dramatic characters, can, therefore, claim justifiably to be in control of their city's tragedy: Athenian, social, and human – existing on stage beyond any chronological time – at least, momentarily.

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
TAPA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
CL	Corolla Londinienses
FGrH	Felix Jacoby ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923-)
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies

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